Ask A Librarian

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/24767374.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Polar (2019), The Jane Austen Book Club (2007), Hannibal Extended Universe- Fandom, Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Grigg Harris/Duncan Vizla | Black Kaiser
Characters:	Adam Towers, Adam Raki, Will Graham, Lee Fallon, Elias Thanatos, Nigel (Charlie Countryman), Hannibal Lecter, Tonny (Pusher), Roberto Bellini (mention), Jean Duran cameo
Additional Tags:	Alpha/Beta/Omega Dynamics, Mating Cycles/In Heat, Omega Grigg, Alpha Duncan, Alternate Universe - Library, Pining, Misunderstandings, True Mates, Mpreg, Happy Ending, Mating Bites, Mating Bond, Mentions of Cancer, Near Death Experiences, Top Duncan Vizla | Black Kaiser, Bottom Grigg Harris, Hugh Dancy/Mads Mikkelsen Character Combinations
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of By the Book
Stats:	Published: 2020-06-17 Completed: 2022-04-22 Words: 40,530 Chapters: 18/18

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by slashyrogue

Summary

There's a particular alpha whose scent drives Grigg Harris wild every time he comes into the library. He doesn't know why but after so many failed attempts at finding a mate he isn't about to pursue him.

No matter what Second Adam says.

Welcome to the Library.

Chapter 1

“Your boyfriend is here again.”

Grigg looked up from the computer and watched as the man who the other staff had dubbed his “boyfriend” walked across the library.

The alpha had started to come in a few weeks ago and each time checked out a manual of some sort. He’d never seen someone read that many manuals in his two years at this job and hated the new automated checkout system because he had no excuse to ask why.

The others had dubbed him Grigg’s boyfriend purely for the moments he’d gone out of his way to restock near the man just to catch his scent as he looked through the shelves. The rich alpha smell followed him home the few times he’d had the briefest pleasure of it.

He’d never smelled someone so good.

“He’s not my boyfriend.”

Second Adam grinned at him as he fixed the reserve shelf. “Well not yet anyway.”

“Not ever,” Grigg mumbled, exiting out of his login.

The other omega had only worked here for two weeks when they’d taken him in quickly, and now it felt like he'd always been around. “Second Adam” was a nickname because of Adam Raki who ran the computer lab and reference desk. He’d been pretty amused by it and even after a few weeks the name stuck. A year later he answered to it more than “Adam” alone.

“Sure,” Second Adam said, “Just like Will doesn’t want to bang that stuffy omega into next week.”

Will Graham was the only alpha among them but that didn’t dissuade their camaraderie. He ran the library with a strict set of rules that were almost always made to be broken by anyone who wasn’t Dr. Hannibal Lecter.

The omega had been a thorn in Will's side for as long as Grigg could remember, even the day of his job interview when Grigg had walked up to them sniping at each other about why Dr. Lecter had left Gray's Anatomy on the cookbook shelf.

According to Aiden, the person he'd taken over for when he left for art school, the alpha and omega had played the same game for over five years.

Grigg couldn't help but smile thinking about Will's determination not to like Dr. Lecter yet he always watched him with warm eyes when the man was in the library.

"Well that's different. They've at least spoken to each other."

"And whose fault is that, eh? You bloody well know that most older alphas don't approach omegas without permission of some sort. The young idiots are the ones who catcall and grab you in public transport. And that scuffy old alpha definitely is looking for an omega like the rest of them or he wouldn't keep reading manuals about things that only socially awkward people buy. I saw him walk out with The Practical Guide to Omegas the other day, you know."

Grigg had seen the book as well and felt glad it hadn't been Omegas for Idiots.

"I just...what if he...I mean…"

Second Adam put down a pile of books, walked over to Grigg, and put hands on Grigg's cheeks.

"You're adorable and you know it," he said, smiling, "Now I'm gonna help you out."

"How….?"

Before Grigg could finish his sentence Second Adam kissed him, the shock of it making him stand there like an idiot. He didn't move even after the kiss ended and watched Second Adam look over his shoulder with a grin.

"You're welcome."

Second Adam went back to the reserve shelf and Grigg turned still in a daze, confused and a little turned on. He was so lost he didn't notice the person in front of him, causing them to drop all the books in their hands.

"Oh, I'm sorry! I... "

He started to help them stack the books up again while the person did the same and noticed the titles: The Ultimate Guide to Journals, How to Cook, The Alpha Guide to Omegas, and The Field Guide to Lucid Dreaming.

Grigg looked up and saw the alpha he'd thought so much about stare back at him. He looked more upset than usual, rather grumpy actually, and he refused to meet Grigg's eyes.

"It's ok, I should've watched where I was going."

His voice made Grigg shiver and when he handed over the books their fingers touched enough to leave him speechless.

"Thank you."

Grigg stood up and watched as he simply walked away.

"Where is Duncan going?"

He turned to see Adam standing there with a book in his hands.

“Duncan?”

Adam nodded. “Yes, he asked me to find this.”

The book he handed Grigg was titled: The Peterson Field Guide to Stars and Planets.

“He was very interested in stargazing, or seemed to be.”

Grigg tried to smile. “He probably just forgot.”

Adam looked annoyed. “Well I don’t appreciate my time being wasted. I need to get back to the desk.”

“I’ll keep it behind the desk,” Grigg whispered, staring at the cover still, “Thanks, Adam.”

Adam turned to leave and stopped after he took several steps.

“Nigel's here again.”

Grigg looked across the library and spotted Adam’s problem.

Nigel Ibanescu.

The alpha was quite possibly the worst choice Adam could ever have in an alpha. He swore, smoked, and always seemed to meet people in the library who looked less than reputable. Second Adam was almost positive Nigel was a drug dealer, even though they had no proof.

Yet the alpha seemed smitten with Adam Raki. He brought him small gifts, an obvious courting gesture, and always seemed to need help on the computers. His attention had already messed with Adam's heats a few times and honestly Grigg wished he'd leave Adam alone. This had been going on for over a month now.

"You can go take your break."

Grigg watched how Adam seemed caught in the sight of the alpha and didn't move.

"He...do you think he really wants to court me?"

"Adam, he bought you a seven hundred dollar ring made of meteorite and dinosaur bones. I think he does."

Adam turned so quickly he almost pushed Grigg down to get away.

Nigel came over just as fast and Grigg had to stop him from following. "Hey, hey just stop."

Up close Nigel smelled even more of cigarettes and pure alpha.

"Where is he going? I have questions that need answering."

"You need to back off," Grigg said, "It's overwhelming him."

Nigel sneered and stepped so close they were nose to nose. "What do you know, huh? You have no idea."

Grigg pushed him back hard and hated how much stronger Nigel was than him.

“I know Adam, and I know omegas. You’re coming on too strong and you need to cool off. Just go.”

Nigel growled. “I know him too.”

“You---”

Before he could finish Nigel was pulled away from him and pushed against the nearest wall hard. Will Graham growled in his face.

“You don’t TOUCH my staff, you hear me?”

Nigel’s lip curled and they both stared at each other in silence for a moment before Will moved back. The other alpha turned and stalked right out the door.

Will came over to him. “You ok?”

Grigg rubbed his chest. “Yeah, I’m fine. He was just hassling Adam.”

“I know. I don’t really think he’s hassling, I think Adam just...gets overwhelmed a bit easier than most.”

“I still wasn’t gonna stand by and watch him be upset. Some alphas need to learn how to back off.”

Will took a deep breath and the sour look on his face made Grigg look around only to see Dr. Lecter not a foot away pretending to look at books.

“So do some omegas.”

“He likes you,” Grigg said.

Will walked back towards the front desk but looked back at Hannibal at least three times along the way. “He likes to bother me.”

“That’s why I can tell you he likes you.”

The silence on Will’s end made Grigg know it was time to stop. The alpha didn’t like to be needled. He put a hand on Will’s shoulder. “Just don’t keep thinking it’s an act.”

Then he walked back toward the backroom where he found Adam Raki with his phone in hand while he mouthed along with something on screen. The daily phenomenon they were all pretty much used to, but not this way. Adam seemed frustrated as he continued to rewind what he watched and started again finally setting it down on the table. Grigg grabbed his lunch bag out of the fridge and sat down beside him.

“Are you ok?”

Adam’s hands shook as he stared at his frozen macaroni and cheese meal.

“Alphas don’t usually like me.”

Grigg smiled. “Nigel does.”

“He smells different.”

“Alphas usually do.”

Adam shook his head. “Not like this.”

Grigg took out his sandwich, chips, and water. Adam grabbed onto his can of pop and took a sip, staring at his phone but he didn’t turn it on.

“What does he smell like?”

He shook his head. “I don’t want to talk about this anymore.”

“Ok.”

They ate their lunches in relative silence after, though Grigg pulled out his phone to go through the registration emails for the in library classes this weekend. His heart stopped when he saw a familiar name in one of them.

Duncan Vizla.

The alpha had registered for Adam’s computer class, as did Nigel.

“You have ten people in the computer class this weekend,” he said softly.

“Hmm. That’s not very many. Should we cancel?”

“No,” Grigg said, closing his email, “There’s still a couple days left.”

“The Mixer at the bar is going on at the same time so that’s probably why.”

“Yeah.”

Grigg hated the way his stomach hurt to think about The Mixer. He’d been to the one last month and had literally not a single alpha, omega, or beta hit on him despite his attempt to catch someone’s eye. Second Adam had gone home with not one but two alphas on his arm.

He’d talked him into going for the first time and Grigg wouldn’t bother going to another one.

“The last time we had a computer class there were a lot more people interested,” Adam said, frowning.

“There wasn’t much learning going on in that class, Adam. It’s fine if there’s a low turn out, especially after the last one was such an alpha fest.”

Adam finished his food and stood up, tossing away his trash. He took a deep breath and let it out slowly. “I am going to tell Nigel I’m not interested in a relationship at the moment.”

Grigg smiled. “Is that how you’re gonna put it?”

He frowned. “Is that wrong?”

“No, it’s just….if it’s not at this moment then it would probably be another moment. Right?”

The other omega blinked. “Oh. Maybe. I do like his scent. He smells...nice. I just don’t think…”

He bit his lip and Grigg put a hand on his shoulder.

“I think it’s a good way to say it.”

Adam nodded once and left the room just as Second Adam came through. The look on his face was an odd one.

“What’s wrong?”

“Did you know Will wants to hire security?”

The idea that they couldn’t take care of themselves irked Grigg a little. Yeah they were all omegas but that didn’t mean they were helpless.

“No.”

“He just put it up on the site. He specifies that the person has to be an alpha. Like us silly damn omegan fillies can’t take care of ourselves.”

“Well with Nigel earlier I---”

“It’s insulting!”

Second Adam threw open the freezer and pulled out a popsicle. He started to suck on it, the sour look on his face growing worse. His oral fixation was something that they all pretended not to notice and even now Grigg looked away.

“I’m not insulted.”

“Well then you can deal with our alpha guard because I want nothing to do with them.”

Grigg wanted to point out just how little Adam had to do with anyone but himself but kept his mouth shut. “Okay. Well I think I have to go back to it.”

Second Adam made a disgruntled noise and he didn’t look at him again. Grigg didn’t want to fight and decided to go to the one person who didn’t have any alphas chasing them.

Mostly because he did all the chasing.

Lee Fallon.

Lee was the children’s librarian, had been since long before Grigg’s time, and also had the good fortune to not be bothered by alpha/omega interaction. He’d gone through massive amounts of chemotherapy a year ago that interacted with his hormones to the point where he no longer had heats or was affected by the scent of any alphas.

This was in his own eyes a godsend because he had no desire to bond with anyone.

So where Second Adam might use his omegan scent to entice someone Lee didn’t need to fall back on such things. Grigg thought this sounded like a very lonely life for an omega because their scent was what made them special. Alphas and omegas, also to an extent betas, were drawn to each other by scent. That’s why they were made that way.

Lee didn’t seem to mind.

The omega was currently surrounded by a group of children at his desk where he regaled them with one of Grigg’s favorite fairy tales.

The Wicked Woods.

He was just on Grigg's favorite part where the omegan prince's secret love was taken out to be hung and instead turns into a bird flying away when the omega refuses to acknowledge him.

"....and the young prince cried at the sight of the bird as it flew away. The King held onto his arm as tears fell down his face.

Yet he did not call out to his sorcerer love.

The Prince had duties to fulfill and love did not have anything to do with them."

The little kids looked shocked as he closed the book in front of him.

"But he wanted to be with the bird!" a little girl said, "Does he go with the bird?"

Lee smiled. "You will have to read the rest of the tale yourselves tonight. See if the omega lives happily ever after."

The kids all scrambled for a copy of the Fairy Tales book and their parents all smiled at Lee as they left the area.

"Another successful story hour where you don't finish?"

Lee tapped his temple. "This is where they should experience stories. If they only hear this stuff from me then what good does it do? If their parents want to play an audiobook or even read it to them, that's fine. But I shouldn't be the storyteller."

Grigg shook his head. "I pity your future children."

“Don’t worry. Since I won't ever have any so their imaginary lives are still full of sunshine and rainbows.”

“You never know.”

Lee walked over to his desk and sat down, leaning back in the chair. “Oh honey, I know. My insides are not a home for anyone but me.”

Grigg shook his head. “Okay then, no babies. But an alpha….”

“Speaking of alphas….I saw you get into it with Nigel earlier.”

“Yeah.”

“Will told me about the security guard.”

Grigg leaned against his desk. “And?”

Lee shrugged. “I think it’s a good idea. He’s not always here, and honestly I’m a lover not a fighter.”

They both laughed.

Grigg felt the phone in his pocket vibrate. He picked it up and saw a text.

“Roberto wants to know if he can work over his Summer break.”

“I’ll need a Page to put stuff back in the stacks with kids out of school. Little monsters never put their books back and they’ll be ten times worse then.”

“I’ll tell him to text Will.”

Lee looked around until he smiled and Grigg turned to see what had his attention.

Across the library Will was nearly nose to nose with Dr. Lecter. Their mouths moved very quickly and it was obvious the alpha was upset.

“I think he’s busy.”

Grigg ran around the desk and rushed off in a fast walk across the children’s section. He saw Second Adam grin at him as he passed the main desk and nearly bumped into several patrons as he passed the automated checkout area.

He got to Will and pulled the alpha back to whisper in his ear. “This is not the time.”

“He’s…”

“Pulling your pigtails, Will. Just breathe.”

The alpha glared at Dr. Lecter once before he turned to stalk away from them both.

“You’re going about this completely wrong,” Grigg mumbled, “You know, he’s not a bad guy. He just doesn’t---”

Hannibal didn’t take his eyes off of Will to acknowledge Grigg for even a moment.

“....understand his worth. Yes I know. He’s quite possibly the rudest person I’ve ever met in my entire life.”

“I wouldn’t put it that way.”

The omega looked at Grigg and smiled. “I didn’t say that wasn’t part of his allure. We all have our preferences, Mr. Harris. Good day to you and I hope you have a very light heat week.”

Grigg sputtered as the omega passed him by and hurried to take out his phone. He opened his Heat Tracker app and saw that his regular heat wasn’t coming for two more weeks.

Obviously the other omega was mistaken.

He shrugged it off and went to follow Will to his office.

Will had his head down on the table and Grigg could hear his breath from the doorway. He knocked and Will didn’t look up at him.

“You ok?”

“I’m fine. I think I need to stay home tomorrow and just not be where….”

“The source of the anger will be?”

“Yeah.”

“Okay. Did you get any responses to the guard job?”

“Quite a lot. I’ll schedule interviews at the end of the week.”

Grigg didn’t move. “It’s almost closing time. You can go home now, Will. We’ll be fine. Adam has a taser.”

Will looked up at him. “I don’t know why I let him get to me like this.”

“Don’t you? I mean….there’s got to be a reason he affects you like this, right?”

The silence he got in return said everything.

“I just think that maybe….there’s more to it.”

Will got up from his desk, grabbed a bag from the hook by the door, and turned to look at Grigg.

“I think maybe you should follow your own advice. Your someone seems to be getting to you without any interaction.”

Grigg smiled. “I don’t have a someone.”

Will sighed and touched his shoulder. “Life shouldn’t revolve around bonds and who gets with who. If it’s meant to happen, it’ll happen. You know? I don’t need to be with someone because my biology makes me.”

He felt a quiver in his lower belly. “That’s true. Though you gotta admit that heat sex is pretty great. I’ve heard it’s even better with someone you love.”

The tiny smile that touched Will's face didn't quite meet his eyes. "That's what I've heard too. Goodnight, Grigg."

"Goodnight."

Grigg watched him leave and felt dazed for a full minute before he remembered Roberto.

"Shit."

If he ran outside now he might be able to catch him but something made him think now wasn't the time. Plus summer wasn't quite here yet. Roberto could wait.

He walked out back up to the counter and saw several young adults leaving in a row. The clock was at half past eight and the few stragglers left were mostly on the computer. Adam was still behind his desk typing away on his laptop, and Second Adam was busy on the display for the Summer Reading Program.

Grigg didn't really have much to do.

Lee was dozing in his desk chair, the little ones now down to zero, and he wondered if anyone would want to hang out after hours.

There was an Omegas Drink Free night at the bar down the road on Tuesdays that they'd been to a few times.

Judging by the somber attitude of his fellow workers Grigg didn't think they would.

"Excuse me?"

He shook himself out of his thoughts and looked where someone should have stood but saw nothing. Then he leaned down and saw a little boy who couldn't be no more than four looking up at him.

"Hey. You need help?"

The little boy was holding a book that had The Avengers on it. "I want this."

Grigg looked around. "Where's your Mommy? You need a card and---"

All at once a man came up behind the boy and Grigg moved back instinctively at the sight of him. He had tattoos on his arms, a shaved head, and the scent of him was quite intimidating.

"I'm sorry, he was supposed to wait for me in the bathroom."

The alpha couldn't have been more than twenty but seemed younger.

"It's okay. Do you have a card here?"

The alpha shook his head. "We just moved into town. I don't really have mail yet but I have ID."

Grigg looked at the little boy and then back to his father. "It's okay. I won't tell if you don't."

The driver's license the man gave read Tonny Lund and the address was only about a block away from the library. Grigg smiled as he typed in the info. "You're so close by we're practically neighbors."

Tonny looked down at his son. “Yeah. The school was close for Aksel and…getting books for free is cheaper than buying them.”

He laughed. “Very true.”

The card sticker printed out fast and Grigg swiped it into the system just as he caught scent of someone coming up behind the counter at his left. “Lee, I want you to meet someone.”

Lee glared at him before faking a smile. “Who’s this?”

“This is Tonny and his son Aksel. They just moved into town and Aksel loves to read. Lee is our children’s librarian.”

Tonny paled and Grigg was confused, especially when Lee beside him. “We’ve met.”

The silence between them was palpable. He stuck the stickers on the card and handed them to Tonny. “I….I guess that’s it.”

Lee turned and walked away without a word.

Tonny’s face fell. “Thank you.”

“I can check out the book if you like.”

“No, I think we’ll do it ourselves. C’mon, Akkie.”

The sight of the alpha as he walked his son to the self checkout station made Grigg’s belly quiver again. His throat felt dry and he looked away just as more patrons started to leave.

What was wrong with him?

He went to Will's office and sat in the alpha's chair, soaking up the leftover alpha smell. The scent might not drive him to distraction like other alphas did but it was a comfort. Grigg closed his eyes and leaned back in the chair just as a knock startled him.

Both Adams stood in the doorway.

"All locked up. Time to clean up the mess? I'll crank up something good."

Adam sniffed the air and frowned at him. "You smell like you're on your heat cycle."

Grigg blushed and sat upright in the chair. "First of all, no, and second…."

"Maybe it's a spontaneous heat from your beau," Second Adam said and wiggled his eyebrows, "So romantic, I could bloody swoon. First Adam has his because of Nigel and now…"

Adam's eyes widened as he shook his head.

"I didn't have my heats because of Nigel it was just…I'm not used to…I…"

Grigg threw a pen at Second Adam and shot him a glare. "We know, Adam, we know. Ignore him. Anyway, I didn't eat much today, I'm sure it's nothing."

Lee came up and poked his head in, now looking much more relaxed. "We gonna clean this dump or what? Drinks are on me whoever wants to go to Omega Night."

"Well then, let's get this party started."

Library patrons were notorious for putting books in the wrong locations and they spent most nights after closing returning them to their proper ones, which should've been the job of a decent page if they had one. They would be happy to have Roberto back if only for a short time if Will okay'd it if only to be able to leave sooner.

The song on the intercom was something Grigg didn't know but it was catchy, the lyrics about 'touch me there, alpha' making his blood run hot even as he straightened things. He wasn't on a heat, shouldn't have been, no matter what everyone seemed to think.

It was just the weather.

He ignored the fact that they had a very reliable air conditioner.

They finished in record time and were able to persuade Adam to come along despite his not wanting to be in that type of crowd. Grigg promised he could leave after just one drink, which after an hour in Halligan's Pub turned into four. They each went their separate ways after a bit. Lee in the bathroom with his alpha of choice, Second Adam on the dancefloor, but Grigg stayed with Adam who seemed to deflate the more liquor he consumed.

"What if I don't like it?"

"Hmm?" Grigg asked, his vision bright along the edges.

"Mating," Adam mumbled, "What if I don't like it?"

He blinked. "Adam, are you---"

"I've never taken a real knot before," Adam confessed, sipping his sweet drink, "I might not like it. It's not that I don't like sex, I watch pornography all the time, and I had a girlfriend. I just…"

As if on cue a grabby alpha came up beside him, plastering himself at Adam's back.

"I can show you what it's like, pretty thing," he mumbled, leaning in close to his ear, "I got the best knot this side of the---"

He never got to finish his sentence.

A very large alpha came out of nowhere, pulling him away and pushing hard enough to make the grabby alpha stumble and fall.

"It's very rude to act that way around omegas!" the alpha yelled, "Apologize!"

The grabby alpha jumped up and pushed their protector, who then jumped onto him like a crazed maniac. Grigg and Adam stood up fast, their drunken calm now gone. Grigg watched in horror as their protector, a curly haired alpha with dated clothes and a rather unfortunate mustache, began to beat the other alpha till the bouncer at the door pulled him back.

There was a small cut above his left swollen eye and his mouth was red. He yelled at the other alpha again even as he was dragged off and Grigg made sure to yell out, "Thank you!" as the bouncer kicked him to the curb.

The other alpha sneered and spit at their feet even as the bouncer returned with a gesture for him to leave as well.

"Fucking cocktease here started it!" he yelled, "Omega cocktease right here!"

He pointed at Adam who frowned. "I want to go home."

"Yeah, me too," Grigg said, "I…."

“Who was that?” Second Adam said, falling against the bar’s edge, “He’s a few years shy of a decent wardrobe.”

“Who cares?” Grigg mumbled, “I’m gonna call for a ride. You about ready to go?”

Second Adam sighed. “Fine. I’ll go see if Lee closed his asshole yet.”

Grigg pulled out his Ridr app and picked the closest car he saw near them. They could get their cars at work tomorrow or Lee could since he lived the closest. “We could sleep at Lee’s,” Grigg said, as they made their way up to the door.

“I want my bed.”

That was that then.

They waited outside and were soon joined by Lee and Second Adam who now both sported rather large hickies by their mating glands. “Fighting fire there, guys?”

“Pfft,” Lee laughed, “Any alpha who even thinks about biting me I’ll cut off his cock.”

The car pulled up was just barely big enough to fit them, but Grigg sat in the back with the two Adams just as Lee opened the door to sit up front.

“Oh fuck no.”

Grigg looked and his eyes widened at their driver.

“Tonny?”

The alpha looked just as surprised. “I’m only here to do my job,” he said, “If you don’t want a ride then walk.”

Lee closed the door and sat down beside him but didn’t look his way.

The ride was tense up front but Second Adam leaned up and practically sniffed the alpha’s neck, making him startle. “Oh he’s adorable. Look at him blush.”

“He’s bad in bed,” Lee snapped, “So don’t waste your time.”

Tonny said nothing.

Lee was dropped off first and he didn’t even bother to say a thing when he left. Then Second Adam, who made sure to give Tonny his number ‘in case of emergency’, followed by Adam, and then last but not least Grigg. He made sure to tip Tonny generously and leaned in to smile at him.

“Thanks.”

Tonny nodded and drove off while Grigg looked at his house.

The sight of the dark place made him sad for reasons he couldn’t explain and when he fumbled for his keys he found himself ready to cry.

This place had been one he picked out of a catalog of homes to buy after he’d gotten the money from the sale of his company, Ridr. The small start up app was now the very same one that Tony was working for and it felt like he’d helped someone out even if the drivers made very little. He had a more than healthy bank account after graduation because of it but didn’t have anything he wanted so the money just continued to build.

His decorating skills weren't quite up to par so he'd just left it the same as he started which didn't reflect much on him other than some old movie posters.

It didn't really matter anyway.

There wasn't anyone he needed to impress.

None of his relationships had yielded anything but breakups since he was fourteen. No one, not even the lowliest of alpha, the worst of beta, or blandest of omega, seemed to be able to stomach being around him for very long.

Grigg locked his door and armed the alarm before he started to take off bits of clothes. He was in his boxers when he got into bed, flopping down and rolling himself up under the blankets.

For a minute he imagined a warm body behind him and sighed, feeling warm all over at the fantasy that wasn't likely to happen anytime soon.

Chapter 2

When he woke it was to the sound of his phone's obnoxious ringtone. He grabbed out blindly for it, face smushed into his pillow.

"Waa?"

"Are you coming down? I can take you to work."

He lifted his head up and swore. "I'm not dressed yet."

"I don't want to be late so I will go without you. If you have your heat please call ahead of time to let Will know. He would be very upset if there was another Valentine's Day incident."

Grigg made a face just thinking about that particular incident.

They still found heart confetti in the stacks.

"I'm not on my heat! I'll be right down!"

He ended the call and ran to get dressed, finishing just fast enough for Adam to still be downstairs. The headache currently throbbing against his skull didn't help matters much though he was in Adam's car fast.

"You should've called off," Adam said, as he started to put on his seatbelt, "You don't look very good."

Grigg gritted his teeth and said nothing as they pulled away from the curb.

He knew what his heats felt like and this wasn't it.

The ride to the library was quiet but still his headache didn't go away. Grigg rubbed at his temples the whole way and tried to get his mind off the pain. He thought of the last comic he'd read, "Omega Man," and could hardly picture the badass omega reporter who searched for stories by day and fought crime by night. The low hum Adam started beside him seemed like a scream and he almost snapped when suddenly his daydream changed. Duncan was there in place of the comic. Grigg leaned forward to kiss his dream alpha and was thrown back just as Adam parked. His eyes flew open in surprise.

Adam frowned when he looked at him.

"You're sure you're not on a heat? Because you smell like you are."

Grigg undid his seatbelt and grumbled. "As I've said, I take suppressants and am not—" he got out of the car, "—on my heat. Thank you for the ride."

He didn't wait for Adam's reply, rushed inside, and went straight for the back room. Second Adam was there eating a pop tart.

"Someone's crabby."

Grigg ignored him and put away his lunch. The minute he closed the fridge door he saw Lee come in with Adam looking more amused than he should be.

"Good morning everyone," he said, eyeing up Grigg as he passed him.

Adam frowned at him still but said nothing.

Lee rested his hand on Grigg's shoulder and leaned in to whisper in his ear.

"I hate to break it to you Griggy, but you definitely smell fertile."

Grigg opened his mouth to protest when Will came into the back room and stopped at the door. His gaze darted around till it landed on Grigg.

"Why the hell...dammit I thought you were smarter than this! Do you not remember what happened when Second Adam was stupid enough to—"

"Hey, hey, now! I wasn't stupid I honestly thought those special emergency suppressants were decent! Grigg here is coming in ready to blow and without any reason," Second Adam interrupted, "I think he's way more stupid than I was."

Grigg grinded his teeth. "I'm not on my heat it's still weeks away! I—"

Will stomped over to the table, set down his lunch bag, and came up to Grigg. The effect was immediate. Grigg moaned and buried his face into the alpha's neck. His whole body felt hot and he stepped back abruptly.

"I didn't...I'm sorry. I'll go home."

Will sighed. "When I made the choice to hire you all here at the same time it came with provisos. Number one will always be : keep track of your heats or take high grade suppressants. I don't care that you might be off for a few days. Just...I don't need another orgy in the stacks. Okay?"

"It wasn't an orgy," Second Adam said, "Technically it was only two alphas so that makes it a threesome!"

Grigg and Will both laughed. "I stand corrected."

“I’ll just,” Grigg sighed, “I’m gonna go. God I’m so embarrassed.”

“Heats are natural things,” Lee said softly, hugging him from behind, “Don’t worry, sweetheart. I just hope you have a decent knot and plenty of food at home.”

“I’ll be fine.”

Lee kissed his cheek. “I’ll come by and check on you.”

Grigg’s face was already a bit red with embarrassment but now it felt hotter than hell. He turned and headed out of the back room without saying another word. The clock was close to nine when he headed out the front door and his body was already grew more aroused with each step.

Which was why he didn’t hear the sound of someone approach until they were directly beside him.

“Excuse me but—“

He turned so fast and stumbled back against his car’s front end. Duncan’s eyes grew wide as he inhaled Grigg’s scent and they both didn’t seem capable of speech.

“Grigg you forgot your lun—oh shit!”

Will slammed into Duncan before he could come at Grigg and the alpha’s glazed eyes were thick with desire. Grigg forced himself to move away, tears in his eyes, and his hands shook as he tried to open his car door.

“SOMEONE GET OUT HERE!”

He got it open but still his body seemed to call out for Duncan, desperate for him, and Grigg couldn't move.

Thankfully Lee moved for him.

The omega grabbed and pushed him into the car.

"GO!"

He closed the door and felt a relief the minute he was cut off from the alpha's scent. Grigg wiped his eyes and forced himself to not look at Duncan as he started the car. He didn't wait less than a second to back out and pulled away with a squeal.

His body and mind grew less muddled as he drove, which made him start to feel the humiliation.

Duncan would soon be normal again and realize how recklessly stupid he had been. Omegas were taught from puberty how to maintain protection from spontaneous heats and the fact that Grigg had ignored the warning signs to instead be stubborn about his was just idiotic for someone almost thirty years old.

He pulled into his garage and hit the button to shut the door before he exited the car. His backside was already wet when he got into the house and by the time he made it to the bedroom his hand jerked at his cock with desperate abandon. He scrambled for the artificial knot in his bedside table as he fell onto the bed and his hands shook when he thrust into his waiting hole.

His moan was so deep he was sure any available alphas nearby would hear him and start to claw at the door to get inside. The idea spurred on his arousal when he imagined Duncan might somehow follow him home and take what Grigg so desperately wanted him to have.

“Alpha,” he whimpered.

He got lost in the fantasy and pumped the knot deep in until he came with an unholy shout, spraying across his shirt.

The knot he kept inside to temporarily satiate the madness and stood on shaky legs to his kitchen in order to stock up on food that would keep him for the next few days. Crackers, chips, nuts, water, juice, and three bags of jerky were in his “Heat Box” that he kept for emergencies though he barely got a chance to toss it to the floor beside the bed before another wave of want hit hard.

Grigg hardly noticed when Lee came inside, so lost in the pleasure, and whimpered at the touch of a wet cloth to his forehead.

“Shit, you’re hitting it hard,” Lee said, “Your boyfriend sure did a number on you. He punched Will in the face after you left and drove off. Will followed him home to be sure he didn’t chase after you.”

He whimpered when Lee brought a water bottle to his lips but took a sip while he still thrust the knot inside himself. When he came it was with a painful groan, hardly enough at all, but to his relief Lee held up a bag labeled “Omega’s Secret.”

“I bought you some good stuff,” Lee said, “I assumed you had nothing but a tired half knot and really that’s not enough for anyone. Not even me who doesn’t get heats anymore.”

He pulled out several different knots of all different shapes and sizes. There was a purple one that even started to vibrate when Lee turned it. He put it in Grigg’s hand and leaned in to kiss his cheek.

“Good luck, Griggy. I got you some food too. I’ll see you Friday.”

Grigg couldn't speak only nod a reply, but it didn't take long for him to pull his own artificial knot out and shove in Lee's gift. He shouted at the sensation, so happy to feel something more, and before long he was lost.

Three days later, after days of fucking himself and eating nothing but junk, his last heat orgasm hit and he felt the frenzy dwindle down to almost nothing.

It was Thursday morning and just before ten when he threw the blankets, sheets, and pillowcases into the washing machine before he dragged himself to the shower. He washed away the stench of slick and tried not to remember his lost days. This had been the most intense and mindless heat he'd ever had, his desperation almost frightening, and he didn't want to think about what that might mean.

When he got back to his room and got dressed he stared at himself for a good long while before he put away the remainder of Lee's gifts. He was lucky to have such a good friend, and would have to repay him for sure.

Grigg went into the kitchen and made himself a real breakfast, suddenly hungry as hell.

He sent out a mass text to all of his coworkers and even his sisters who apparently had been told by Lee he was going to be indisposed.

Both of his sisters demanded to know about this "boyfriend" that Lee had mentioned and Grigg explained there was just someone he had a crush on.

Second Adam: Your boyfriend hasn't been in since you left. I think he's hiding.

Adam: Or he's being respectful and not trying to acknowledge that he and Grigg almost had heat sex in the parking lot.

Lee: I think he's no doubt waiting for Grigg to come back so he can apologize. That one is definitely an old fashioned alpha. He's got to be horrified.

Grigg's stomach wrenched as he thought about Duncan. He should be the one to apologize, not the alpha, but the very idea made him want to throw up.

Me: I'm the one who should've known better. I wish I knew his address or something. I hope he does come back so I can just say it was my mistake.

Lee : You didn't know! It was an honest mistake. It's not like you kept ignoring the signs of several people who said you smelled like you were in pre-heat.

Adam : That's exactly what he did.

Second Adam : We know, Addie. Lee was having a go at Grigg.

Grigg put the phone down and took a bite of his food. He thought about the way Duncan had looked at him that day, the smell of him, and wondered for a moment what could have been.

Me : I'll try to find a way to apologize when I go back to work tomorrow. I hope you all have a good day.

Second Adam : We'll try, love. You go out and get some fresh air today. Go see that super movie you were jabbering about.

Adam : See you tomorrow, Grigg.

Lee : The interviews for the alpha guard are going to be on so don't be surprised if the place is crawling with alphas. *kisses*

He'd forgotten about the interviews.

The whole idea of being protected by an alpha was not something Grigg needed at the moment but he recognized that it was probably a good idea.

Grigg ate the rest of his breakfast without once taking a look at his phone.

He forced himself to take a drive just before noon and decided he was heat free enough to stroll by the fountain if only for a little while. There were plenty of people there, parents with kids mostly though Grigg spotted some couples and tried not to feel envious. The envy is

what made him not notice a familiar profile as he headed for his favorite bench by the water and it wasn't until he got close that he was hit with a very distinct scent.

Duncan.

The alpha turned at his arrival and seemed to freeze.

"I'll find somewhere else to--"

Duncan got up and shook his head. "No, if you'd like to sit here I will find another place to go."

Grigg's chest hurt. "You don't have to go."

The alpha looked away from him. "It's improper. My behavior towards you was shameful. I promise you I usually have much more restraint. I was going to apologize to your partner but I found myself staying away."

He sat down and tried to understand what Duncan had just said. "My partner?"

Duncan sighed and sat beside him. "The omega I saw kiss you at the library."

Grigg smiled. "Adam isn't….we're not...I don't have a partner. Not for a long time. I don't think I've ever had anyone stick around long enough to be called a partner."

The alpha frowned. "I find that hard to believe."

"I'm not really that typical of an omega. I don't like the things most omegas like, and I tend not to mix well with anyone. I've dated alphas, omegas, and even betas. I just…."

Duncan reached out and almost touched his hand but instead put his right beside Grigg's. "I'm sorry that has happened to you. I don't have much experience in the way of relationships, my old job tended to never keep me in one place at a time, but I've seen you in the library and never thought anything bad of you. Your enthusiasm for the written word is rather…endearing."

Grigg smiled. "How do you know I have any enthusiasm? I don't think we've ever had a real conversation before now."

The alpha blushed. "I may have heard you speak to other library patrons about books you enjoy. There were some science fictional type novels and even graphic ones that I found interesting. I used to read comic books as a boy and it was nice to go back into that world for a more adult version."

He felt his heart beat wildly in his chest. "Oh."

"Since I retired I've been trying to get back into what it's like to be a person again. My work really took up much of my time."

Grigg looked at him and his gaze lingered on Duncan's eye patch. "What was it you did?"

"I worked for a private firm that specializes in disposal."

He immediately wondered if the alpha of his dreams used to be hitman. The idea shouldn't make him insanely aroused but to his embarrassment Grigg suddenly felt slick pool in his backside. "I...I'm gonna go. It...it was nice talking to you, Mr. Vizla. I hope I'll see you in the library tomorrow?"

"You know my name."

"Yeah, I…"

“Please call me Duncan.”

Grigg smiled and stepped away some more. “Only if you’ll call me Grigg, Duncan.”

“Is it proper for alphas to call omegas by their first names, now? I’ll admit I’m out of practice.”

He laughed. “For about twenty years, yeah.”

“Good talking to you then, Grigg.”

“You too, Duncan.”

Grigg took off quickly and tried to calm down his hormones. His hand shook as he pulled out his phone and dialed the one person who’d know what might calm him down.

“Missing me already, Griggy?”

“I just saw Duncan at the fountain and I think he used to be a hitman and god I almost climbed in his lap on the park bench and I can’t stop slicking,” he whispered, looking around as he walked.

“You left? Your body was telling you to jump that old alpha’s bones and you left? Are you insane?”

“I’m not knot hungry like you are! I...please, just tell me how to calm down. I want to go back and just…”

“When was the last time you had a proper knot?”

Grigg wiped sweat off his brow and ducked into a public toilet. He closed the door and took a deep breath. “I don’t know.”

“Then you should go back and flirt with your boyfriend. He’s obviously into you if he’s telling you he’s some sort of professional killer. I’ll admit I assumed pirate from the eyepatch but---”

“Lee! I don’t think he sees me like that. He called me ‘endearing’ and said I made him like reading books again. That doesn’t sound like flirting.”

“He’s an old man, Grigg. It’s flirting. Now go back or I’m gonna lock the two of you in the closet at Adam’s computer class tomorrow night.”

Grigg closed his eyes and let out a long breath. He felt another gush of slick leave his ass and stood up. “I’m gonna go home.”

“Grigg, c’mon.”

“Thanks for nothing, Lee.”

He stuffed the phone in his pocket and got up from the toilet. The smell of the bathroom was pretty pungent but he moved to leave when someone stood in his way. He wasn’t an alpha but built like one: broad shoulders, tall, and too big for the shirt he wore.

“Excuse me.”

“You smell nice there, Meggie,” he teased, reaching out to touch Grigg’s cheek.

“I think Meggie stopped being a cute omega nickname in the nineteen eighties. If you don’t move I’m gonna make you.”

The beta stepped forward and Grigg pushed him hard. He was caught off guard when Grigg punched him and it didn’t take more than a moment for him to get around the asshole before someone else was in front of the doorway.

It was Duncan.

The alpha’s lip curled and he hissed. “Get outside, Grigg.”

“I can take care of---”

All at once several things happened.

The beta rushed Grigg, who sidestepped and stumbled into the sink. Duncan grabbed the beta and broke his arm at the shoulder, then slammed him into the wall. He felt a deep satisfaction when the beta fell face first into a dirty puddle of what was probably piss.

Duncan was panting, fighting to catch his breath, and Grigg felt another gush of slick pour down the back of his pants.

“Alpha,” he whimpered, shaking as Duncan seemed to hesitate.

The alpha took a step forward and then to Grigg’s dismay ran for the door. Grigg fell to his knees, shaking, and knew even if he could move to follow Duncan would already be gone.

He pulled out his phone and dialed with tears streaming down his face.

“Lee, I….I need you to come get me.”

“Oh Griggy, what happened?”

He wiped his face with the back of his hand. “I can’t, I….”

“We’re on our way.”

Chapter 3

Grigg woke up the next morning with what could only be considered an emotional hangover.

He'd spent most of the night crying, going on and on to Lee who tried to be sympathetic but just kept asking him to tell the story about Duncan breaking the grabby beta's arm in the bathroom again. Second Adam chastised him for not going after him fast enough, and even told him how easy it would be to snatch Duncan's address out of the library database.

The pain of rejection made him stick with Adam, who was a bit frazzled himself after a run in with Nigel just before he and Second Adam closed up for the night.

Adam's ex girlfriend had stopped by and flirted with him a bit, hanging around his desk and getting him anxious. Nigel had stood to the side, glaring at them both, and when she finally left he'd made a show of slamming his chair into the computer table. They'd spotted him outside the library when they closed up, and again he'd said absolutely nothing.

"It was quite odd," Second Adam said, "He seemed a bit down, for him anyway, and it took all I had to keep Adam from---"

"I wasn't gonna do anything," Adam mumbled, nursing a Sweet Omega.

"You whined the whole way here, Addie," Second Adam said, wrapping an arm around him.

"No, I didn't."

"Alright, love. You didn't."

The four of them had pretty much drowned their sorrows for the rest of the night after that.

He didn’t even remember them leaving the bar.

Grigg groaned, rolled over, and fell right onto a warm body beside him. He yelped, sitting up, and Lee lifted his head out from under a pillow. “It’s seven fucking thirty, Griggy. Go back to sleep.”

“We have to get to work.”

Lee whined. “Noooo, I’m calling in sick.”

The sound of shuffling feet made them both look to the door just in time for Adam to appear holding two cups of coffee. “Good morning.”

“You stayed?” they both asked at once.

“No one was sober enough to drive me home,” Adam murmured, coming toward the bed, “And I don’t like to take Ridr that late at night. I had trouble falling asleep but mostly because of Second Adam snoring so loudly.”

“I do *not* snore,” came a tired mumble from Second Adam behind him, “You are just very particular, though I have to say the moaning did help me sleep very well.”

Second Adam flopped onto Grigg’s bed as Adam frowned at all three of them.

“I don’t moan in my sleep.”

“Must have been my very active imagination,” Second Adam said, sipping his coffee, “Though I don’t think I’d imagine you saying Nigel that many times.”

Adam blushed, frowning, “I need to go home and change.”

“We all need to change,” Grigg sighed, “I have clothes here if you---”

“ I want *my* clothes,” Adam said, “I *need* my clothes.”

Second Adam yawned, standing up in a stretch. “I’ll take you, Addie. Just give me a moment.”

Adam turned and headed down the hall, leaving them alone again.

“Was he really moaning about Nigel in his dreams?”

“Oh yes,” Second Adam purred, “I heard quite a bit ‘Don’t leave’ and ‘I’m sorrys’ in there as well. The poor thing has no idea how far gone he is on that alpha, does he? I mean of all the alphas to get attached to Nigel’s still much worse than your assassin silver daddy.”

Grigg wiped his hands across his eyes. “Shut up, just….don’t.”

“All right, Grigg,” Second Adam said, “I’ll get out of your way then. See you two among the stacks.”

He closed the door when he left, and Grigg tried to pretend Lee wasn’t watching him as he got up to dress. The other omega said not one word, and he almost thought perhaps Lee had fallen asleep again until he turned to see him sitting on the bed fully clothed.

“It’s not over, Griggy,” Lee sighed, “You know that. There’s something more about Duncan than you’re letting yourself believe.”

Grigg hated the blush that came to his cheeks. “He’s not my mate.”

“You didn’t throw yourself at Will when you went into heat, sweetie. The minute you spotted your one eyed silver fox you---”

Grigg shook his head. “Stop, okay? Just….stop. Can’t we just go to work, ogle a few alpha guards, and pretend nothing happened?”

Lee cocked his head and smiled. “You had me at ogle alphas. Let’s go.”

“You don’t want to change into something of mine?”

“Do you honestly think this is my first time going into work after a long night out? I have clothes behind my desk for just this reason.”

Grigg laughed. “Of course you do.”

Lee’s smile faded. “Are you ok? I’m sure Will would be totally ok with you just not going in today.”

“I’m fine.”

Lee got himself out of Grigg’s bed, stretched, and grabbed Grigg into a tight hug.

“Maybe he’ll show up today.”

“He won't,” Grigg sighed, “But I’ll be fine. I’ve gotten over alphas before, this is just….”

“An Alpha who broke someone’s arm and beat the shit out of them in your honor, which pretty much goes right to your omegan instincts and then some?”

Grigg felt his stomach clench as he clutched Lee harder. “Shut up.”

He kissed his cheek. “I love you too.”

Grigg sighed. “What did I do to get stuck with you as a best friend?”

“You’re just lucky I guess.”

He laughed. “Yeah.”

They had a quick breakfast before heading for Lee’s car, and Grigg tried not to let yesterday’s sadness overtake him. Duncan was obviously not interested in him and he had to understand that. Sometimes alphas were just chivalrous, and Duncan was the old fashioned kind.

Both Adams’ cars were in the parking lot when they pulled up, but there were also a few unfamiliar ones. Grigg was excited about the chance to laugh at the alpha guard applicants, and Lee looked just as excited when he met him at the door.

“Ohhh I can’t wait to see what kinds of Alphas came in for this,” he sighed, “It’s like a second Christmas.”

Grigg laughed.

“There you two are!” Will yelled, “I have people to interview all day, so I have to get someone on intake. There’s a bunch of donated stuff coming in from that library that closed over in Wharton that needs to be looked through and processed.”

Grigg's face fell. "It can't be done later?"

"Grigg, it's new books. We hardly ever get books like this."

He was gonna miss the Alphas.

He sighed. "I'll do it."

"Can I do it?" Adam asked, making them all turn.

"Adam, I need you at the desk."

He frowned. "I don't want to be around all these strange alphas, Will. I don't...the scent...please let me do it. Grigg is very good at computers too."

Grigg put a hand on his shoulder. "I can do the computer desk today," he said, "Let Adam sit in the back."

Will frowned. "I guess that's fine. But I need *you* , he pointed at Second Adam, "At the main desk and Lee…"

"I'll oogle the alpha meat while reading to the children," Lee joked, wiggling his eyebrows.

Will laughed. "Then it's settled. It's gonna be a long day, but hopefully we find our guy."

Grigg patted Will's shoulder. "We will, don't worry."

Will frowned at him. “You ok?”

“I’m fine,” he said, “It wasn’t a bad one.”

“Good. But next time…”

“I’ll listen, Will. I promise.”

“That’s all I ask,” Will said, “Now, everybody get to your stations cuz I’m about to open the doors.”

Grigg headed for the computer desk, and sat down in Adam’s chair pulling up the list for tonight’s class again while he waited. It seemed the class was still stuck at ten, and to his surprise both Nigel and Duncan still were listed.

He frowned. Hopefully there was no trouble there tonight.

The sound of someone yelling made him look as the alphas came in, at least six, and one of them was instantly recognizable by voice alone.

“APOLOGIZE FOR THAT HORRIBLE JOKE!” the alpha said.

It was the alpha from the bar a few nights ago who’d defended Adam’s honor, and he seemed to still dress rather unfortunately in the past. A taller alpha with dark hair and eyes pushed him away laughing.

“Make me, old man.”

“I…”

“What’s going on here?” Will asked, coming over to them.

“This man was making derogatory jokes about omegas outside, and he should *not* be hired to work among them. There were several men who spoke of working here to have sexual intercourse with the omegan staff, and I find that disrespectful.”

Grigg smiled.

He might be a bit outdated but Will would like him.

“You first,” Will said, grabbing the alpha’s arm, “And you,” he said to the other one, “Get out of here.”

“What? You’re just gonna believe some old loser who---”

The alpha broke away from Will and rushed at the younger alpha, punching him in the face. He staggered back, surprised, and the alpha growled.

“I am not a loser! I am *very handsome* and many omegas want to have sex with me but I respect them!”

Grigg felt his phone vibrate and he looked down.

Lee: I get first dibs on the old one. He’s kinda ugly but it’s growing on me.

Me: Go right ahead.

Second Adam: He’s all yours.

Adam: I’m busy, please go back to work.

He smiled as he saw Will take the older alpha's arm, and lead him to the office. "The rest of you just...find a seat."

Grigg sighed, still smiling, and felt normal for the first time in days.

Today was already a good day.

He got lost in the stickering Adam left at the desk after that, and didn't notice when the place started to fill up with people. The first kid who asked for a computer key was well mannered, thank god, and the few older creeps after that weren't as much but he got through them nicely.

Then, of course, there was Nigel.

Nigel showed up after the alpha applicants tripled, and his annoyance at finding Grigg instead of Adam at the computer desk was obvious. "Where is he?"

Grigg sighed. "Adam's working in the back, he...doesn't like the strange alphas being here."

He watched Nigel relax. "Oh, that's...good."

"Can I help you?"

Nigel smiled. "Can you get my mind off a skittish beautiful angel who won't give me the time of day?"

He frowned. "No, but...he does like you. Really, he does. He's just...Adam…takes a while to warm to people."

Nigel shook his head. “Thanks Darling, but I think it’s better for me to bow out now that the snobby soccer mom alpha is courting him.”

“Wait, no, she’s not---”

He took off so fast Grigg cursed under his breath, hating that he was stuck here.

Me: Adam, Nigel was just here.

Adam: Nigel? Did he ask about me?

Second Adam: He looked like someone kicked him in the balls, the poor thing. That alpha’s crazy about you, Addie.

Lee: I didn’t see him!

Adam: What did he say?

Me: He thought Beth was courting you. I tried to tell him she wasn’t and stop him from going but he took off.

Second Adam: Shit. I can go get him?

Adam: It’s ok. Will doesn’t want you to leave the desk.

Second Adam: Addie…

“Excuse me?”

Grigg looked up into the gorgeous face of an alpha he’d never seen before. “Um...hi.”

“I’m waiting to interview for the position,” the alpha said, pushing up his glasses, “But I was looking for a book. It’s King’s Heart, by L. Lacquer.”

Grigg blinked.

Lacquer was a notorious omegan writer who wrote under an assumed name to quickly become a bestselling author of thrillers. Very rarely did an alpha come in to find her books after the reveal of her second gender.

His heart skipped a beat as he nodded. “Yeah, her stuff is in L - Mystery. You’ll find all…”

“Seventeen of her books?”

He nodded. “Yeah.”

The alpha smiled. “My name is Lucas and I’m new to the area,” he said, “I...hope to see you again sometime.”

He blushed. “I…yeah. I’m…”

“Grigg,” Lucas said, smiling, “I saw the name on your tag.”

Grigg laughed. “Yeah, I...I forgot I had that.”

Lucas pressed the glasses up on his nose. “I’m sure it happens all the time.”

Grigg watched him go, confused at the sudden attraction, and was just about to text the group chat when a familiar scent filled the air. He looked up just as Duncan walked inside, and their eyes met.

“Oh.”

Lucas might’ve been handsome and nice but that moment they had was nothing compared to the attraction to Duncan. Grigg licked his lips as Duncan went to the front desk and gave

Second Adam his books.

Lee: Grigg, if you don't go over there I'm gonna steal that old man for myself.

Adam: Is he back? Grigg is Duncan back?

Grigg let out a long breath and forced himself to look away.

Me: Drop it, Lee.

Lee: You stupid idiot.

Second Adam: He's coming toward you.

Grigg looked up just as Duncan did just that. His heart beat wildly in his chest as Duncan came up to the computer desk, and stopped just short of Grigg's reach. "Hello."

"Hi," Grigg said, "I didn't think you'd come back after---"

Duncan reached into his jacket and handed him a package. "I saw this yesterday and...thought of you."

Grigg took the package and unwrapped it fast.

OMEGA MAN #1

It was a cheap comic, barely worth twenty dollars since it was so unpopular, and yet Grigg's eyes filled with tears at the sight of it. Duncan had heard him talk about this book before, he had to have, and he remembered Grigg liking it.

"It's...amazing."

“Grigg, I---”

“Mister Library Man?” someone asked, making them both look at the little boy standing by the desk, “My computer won’t work.”

Grigg put the comic in the closest desk drawer and smiled. “I’ll be right there.”

He turned to look at Duncan but to his shock Duncan was gone.

Grigg let out a sigh and followed the little boy over to his station.

It was just as well, really, he needed to calm down after the reaction he’d had.

The Omega Man comic wasn’t a gift of intention.

It was Duncan being nice.

That was all.

The sooner Grigg realized that while he may be attracted to Duncan, the alpha had made it very clear he didn’t feel the same. He sighed, and helped the little boy Steven get into the system before turning to see Lucas watching him from the stacks.

Maybe there was hope for him to find an Alpha yet.

Chapter 4

The day seemed to drag after he met Lucas, and though they didn't speak again Grigg felt hopeful they would. Adam came out so he could take lunch around mid afternoon when all the alphas were gone and looked like he'd been crying but Grigg didn't say anything.

He didn't really know what to say.

Grigg sat in the breakroom alone after putting one of his frozen dinners in the microwave, and though he kept the comic Duncan gave him right on the table he didn't read it. He spent most of his lunch actively trying to think of anything else.

Will coming in was the best thing that could've happened to his lunch.

"Well, you look...um...I won't say good."

He shook his head. "I'm fine."

Will sat across from him and sighed. "What's wrong? Duncan?"

"No."

"Grigg…"

"I know you're all saying it's more than I think it is, and I...I almost want to believe you."

"The guy sat across from the library actively staring at you most of the day. You're gonna tell me it's not because he's crazy about you?"

“What?” Grigg asked, heart beating faster, “He was here?”

“Um, yeah? I think he left just before I called you for lunch.”

Grigg frowned. “Why didn’t I see him?”

“Maybe you were too distracted by the alpha in the glasses?”

He smiled. “He’s…”

“Not working here,” Will said, shaking his head, “I can’t have someone that attractive working around Second Adam, or apparently you.”

Grigg shook his head. “That’s not...I mean that’s not really fair! He seemed…”

“He wasn’t really all that intimidating, and really there was only one choice.”

He blinked. “Who?”

“Elias? He said he recognized some of you and thought you were extremely unattractive, so…”

Grigg frowned. “I’m not sure…”

“The alpha who got into the fight? I think you saw him?”

“Ohhh!” he said, laughing, “You mean the guy in the zoot suit who looked like he came out of the seventies?”

Will laughed. “Yes, that was him. He’s strong, quick to act, and when I called all his references they said his only problem was a ‘condition’ he has that makes him butt heads with people a lot who talk back to him. I don’t want someone who’s gonna think before they act in a tense situation.”

“So...you just want a charging bull?”

“Pretty much, yeah. I can’t always be there for you all and he seemed pretty genuine.”

Grigg shrugged. “I guess that’s fine.”

“He’s gonna come back in the morning, I was gonna ask if you could show him around?”

“Sure,” Grigg mumbled, stabbing into his lunch, “That’s…”

Will frowned at him. “...fine,” he said, “You said that already. You sure you’re ok?”

“I’m perfectly fine, Will. Don’t worry,” he sighed, getting up, “I’m gonna get back to the front desk, unless it’s Adam’s turn?”

“You still have fifteen minutes left of lunch.”

“I don't need it.”

“Grigg…”

Grigg left the room, feeling worse than we’d head entered, and barely paid attention enough that he almost ran into Lee who grabbed his arm. “Hey, watch it!”

He looked at him, and suddenly his eyes filled with tears. “I’m sorry, I…”

“Griggy? What...did I hurt you? Why…”

Grigg fell into his chest, suddenly crying, and Lee turned them around right back to the backroom. Will shot up when they came inside, and Grigg sat down crying into his hands.

“Grigg?”

“I didn’t do anything!” Lee said, “He just…”

Will rubbed his back. “This is bad.”

“No shit.”

“Grigg,” he sighed, “Look at me, Grigg.”

He looked up, wiping the tears from his face. “I’m sorry.”

“It’s fine, we just...are you ok?”

“I don’t know.”

“I know you just got off your heat, but...I mean you’ve had plenty of them before.”

Lee rubbed his back along with Will. “Not like this one.”

Will sighed. “Do you need a few days?”

“What? No, I…”

“Grigg, you’re crying and don’t know why.”

“I…”

“If you need a few more days, it’s fine. We have the next computer class at the end of this week but after the last barely had anyone but Adam’s boyfriend I think we’ll be fine.”

Grigg wiped his face. “I can stay, I just…”

Lee wrapped an arm around his back. “Maybe he can stay in the back?”

Will frowned. “But Adam…”

“I’m sure he wouldn’t mind.”

Grigg stood, shaking his head. “I’m fine! I just…”

“Go tell Adam to stay up front,” Will said, “Grigg will go in the back for a while.”

Lee nodded, patting Grigg on the shoulder, and left them alone again. Will got up from the table, grabbing a bag from the fridge, and sat down.

“You know,” he said, taking out things one by one, “When I hired you all people told me it was a bad idea. Many, many people.”

“Maybe they were right,” Grigg mumbled, wiping his face, “I mean…”

“No,” Will said, unwrapping a sandwich, “They weren’t. No one could run this place like you all could, Grigg, and we both know it. There’s no one I’d rather work alongside. Omegas...they’re different but in a good way. It’s easier to get along with omegas, really.”

Grigg smiled. “Not all of them.”

Will frowned. “No, not all of them.”

“Speaking of people who like people…”

“Grigg…”

“Hannibal spends most of his time here trying to get your attention, Will, and yeah he goes about it the wrong way but that’s all it is. Some omegas like to be chased.”

Will blushed. “I’d rather mate with Elias than that pretentious snob.”

“Uh huh.”

“Go back to work,” Will mumbled, “Get out of here.”

“You never come in here,” Grigg said, standing, “You get out of here.”

“No.”

He laughed.

“Hiding from someone?”

He blushed harder. “No.”

“Will…”

“Grigg?”

They both turned to see Adam standing there looking hopeful. “Lee said you were going in the back to finish up the intake, is that right?”

“Yeah, Addie, if that’s ok with you.”

“Can I show you my system?”

“Sure.”

Grigg turned to go, feeling much better now, and ignored the urge to flip Will off when he called out to him.

“And stay out!”

He smiled, shaking his head, and Adam led him toward the back. “What was that about?”

“Will was just being an ass.”

“Oh.”

“How are you holding up?”

Adam didn’t say anything as they walked into the room, where Grigg blinked at his progress.

“Oh wow, you’re almost done.”

“Yes, I’ve separated everything into genres and sections. There’s also a very large pile of discards, which will need to be thrown away or I’m sure Will would let us take them.”

Grigg smiled. “I’m sure he would. What was your criteria?”

“Writing in the books, damage, that kind of thing.”

“I see.”

“And I’ve started to print the stickers up in front so if you need me to bring them let me know.”

“Okay.”

They stood there, silent, and Grigg frowned. “Adam?”

Adam looked back at the door. “Do you think he might come back?”

Grigg blinked. “Who?”

He looked at Grigg sadly. “Nigel.”

“Oh, I...I don’t know.”

Adam’s face fell. “Oh.”

“I mean, they told me he came to your last computer class? Maybe he’ll come this week?”

He smiled a little. “Maybe.”

Grigg patted his shoulder. “It sucks sometimes to be an omega.”

Adam nodded. “I just wish I...dealt with it easier.”

“Addie…”

“Beth didn’t like me because I was different, and Nigel...he doesn’t really know all that much about me. What if…”

Grigg suddenly hugged him, tears in his eyes, and felt Adam hug back a bit. “I think...Nigel wants to know you. Much more than Beth ever did. That’s something to clutch onto, you know?”

Adam sniffled. “You think so?”

“Yeah, Adam, I do.”

He stepped back, standing straight, and nodded. “Thank you, Grigg. I will...leave you to this. Have a good day.”

“Thanks Adam.”

Adam left him in a rush, and the silence was more helpful than it should have been. He started right in on the books, soon lost in the system, and by the time a knock came to the door he was nearly done organizing.

“Knock, knock.”

Grigg looked up to see Second Adam standing in the doorway, smiled, and sat the last book on the Mystery pile. “Hello Second Adam.”

“How’re you, Darling? Lee said you were having a time.”

He blushed. “I’m fine. Lee needs to just shut his mouth.”

“He’s just worried about you, Grigg,” Second Adam said, walking around to touch the stacks of books, “We all worry about each other here, you know? It’s not a bad thing.”

“I know, I just…hate having to deal with all these feelings.”

Second Adam scoffed. “Feelings? Oh you poor thing. I’m glad I never have to deal with those.”

Grigg smiled. “You’ll get there.”

He made a face. “Not if I can help it. I’m more than happy to fuck as many alphas as I possibly can and not care for them. The more the merrier, really.”

Grigg laughed, grabbing his arm. “You’re ridiculous.”

“But I got you to smile, love, so that’s something right?”

“Yeah, yeah, now get out of here. I have to go get the stickers and…”

Second Adam pulled a stack of stickers from his pocket. “A gift from our dear Addie.”

He took the stickers. “You are a lifesaver.”

“I live to serve.”

“Now I don’t have to worry about going back out there and...seeing...anyone.”

“Like that sexy alpha in the glasses?”

Grigg blushed. “No…”

“Your poor old man will be so upset if you choose that one over him, you know.”

“I’m not...I mean…”

Second Adam patted his shoulder. “I’m kidding, Darling,” he whispered, leaning in close enough that his breath tickled Grigg’s ear, “I’m sure if given the right motivation you could...have them both?”

Grigg blushed, pushing him away. “Go back to work.”

He laughed. “Abusing me after all I’ve done for you? You’re just like Will sometimes. Did you know he hired that ugly alpha instead of all the pretty ones?”

Grigg pulled a sticker off the mystery page, and started to stick them on. “Yeah, he told me.”

“Just about broke my heart, the monster. All those wasted knots.”

He grinned. “I mean, I’m sure Elias has a knot.”

Second Adam made a face. “I’d rather fuck Will to be honest. At least he’s pretty.”

“You’ll have some stiff competition.”

He sighed. “I suppose.”

“You’ll get over the disappointment, I’m sure. Now, are you gonna let me get back to work?”

“Fine, Darling, throw me out. See if I return with snacks,” he mumbled, turning to go.

“I love you, Second Adam!”

“Of course you do, sweetheart. Everyone does.”

Grigg got all the mystery and romance books stickered before his alarm went off hours later indicating closing time. No one returned, not once, and he tossed the remnants in the trash as he headed for the front again.

The sound of music playing indicated the place was locked tight, and he breathed a sigh of relief.

“THERE HE IS!” Lee called out, running for him, “Let’s dance, Griggy.”

Grigg laughed. “We have to clean up.”

“We’ve got time, Will’s busy jerking off in his office.”

“What?”

Lee giggled. “I’m kidding, but the look on your face…”

Grigg pushed him away. “Fuck you.”

“You wish!”

They spent the next hour cleaning things up again, tossing out all the food hidden in the stacks and putting things back where they came from. Grigg was exhausted by the end of the night, and Will came out to chastise them for being there for so long. “I’m not giving any overtime for dancing around!”

“Old Man Graham is at it again!” Second Adam teased, “Run boys!”

Adam came out as they headed for the door, still looking sour, and Grigg took his hand when they left. “You ok?”

He nodded. “Yes, I’m fine.”

Grigg squeezed. “If you need a ride…”

“I have my car,” Adam mumbled, as they walked through the second door, “I can…”

They all paused when they saw a puff of smoke come from around the front of the library, just out of sight. Grigg heard Adam gasp.

“Adam?”

He squeezed Grigg’s hand. “Is it…”

Lee came up between them, wrapping his arm around Adam’s neck. “We can drive you home, Addie, if you’re not ok with this.”

“Maybe it’s not him,” Grigg whispered.

“Oh it’s him,” Second Adam purred, “Who else would it be?”

Adam stared at the smoke, coming out in another puff, and when Nigel stepped into view he froze. Neither of them said a word, not even stepping closer, and before Adam could even let out a breath Nigel turned to walk away.

He was shaking in Grigg’s grip, and he glared after Nigel. “What the fuck was that?”

“Does he want Adam to chase him or what? That’s not how this works.”

“What kind of alpha…”

Adam stepped forward, surprising them all, and stood there staring after nothing. “Do you...do you think he’ll make me…”

“No, Adam,” Grigg said, “But maybe…”

“He’s an ass,” Second Adam growled, “You don’t need this kind of game playing, Addie.”

“But…”

“We’ll all go out to the bar, get a few drinks, and..”

Adam looked back at them. “I don’t...I think I want to go after him?”

“Adam…”

The sound of a motorcycle starting up made Adam freeze, and before they all could even stop him he took off running.

“Adam, wait!”

All three of them chased after him, Grigg’s heart beating wildly in his chest, and when Adam finally turned a corner out of view he had tears in his eyes. He couldn’t let anything bad

happen to Adam, not him, and when he stopped to catch his breath he was just in time to see them take off.

Adam was on the back of Nigel's back, arms around his waist, and Nigel nodded to him as they passed.

He didn't smile, or look smug.

Grigg wasn't sure what to think about that.

"Where...are...they...going?" Lee said, gasping for breath, "We can't just…"

"He'll be fine," Grigg said, leaning against the wall as a tear fell down his cheek, "He's with Nigel."

"Grigg…"

He hated how jealous he was of Adam right now, running off into the night with the alpha who seemed to have a hold on him, and as Lee hugged him the tears kept coming.

Was Duncan more than Grigg wanted to let himself believe?

And, if he was, could he be ok being without him forever?

Chapter 5

“He’s not answering his phone,” Second Adam said, the anger in his voice making Grigg feel on edge.

“Would you?” he asked, taking a large sip of his beer.

“No text messages either,” Lee mumbled, “We really need to tell someone, I mean…”

“He’s a grown man,” Grigg said, “Not a child.”

“But…”

“You should’ve seen Nigel when he talked about him,” Grigg said, his hand shaking as he gripped the beer bottle, “He’s not gonna hurt him. I’d be surprised if they even kissed.”

The three of them sat there, Adam’s absence a hole in the middle of them that seemed hard not to dwell on, and when an alpha came up to hit on Second Adam even he barely noticed.

“Hey, you wanna…”

“He’s not interested,” Lee mumbled, finishing his wine, “But I am.”

“Hey!” Second Adam said, “That was…”

“If we’re gonna sit here and worry about Adam all night then we might as well go home. But I’m not leaving till I’ve had a good knot. Have fun, boys.”

The two of them watched him go, Grigg feeling worse by the second, and he was about to call Will when his phone vibrated. He looked down.

Adam: I'm ok, don't worry. We're looking at the stars. Nigel knows very little about stars.

Grigg smiled.

Grigg: I'm glad to hear it. Have a good night, Adam.

He set his phone down and leaned in close to Second Adam's ear. "He's ok! He texted me!"

Second Adam's eyes lit up. "You're sure!?"

Grigg showed him the phone and he laughed. "Well then, I'm gonna go snatch that knot from Lee. I'll be back!"

He sighed as he watched Second Adam go, and finished his beer looking at the texts.

Adam had finally gone for the attraction he had for Nigel, unlike Grigg, and now it seemed things were working out. Grigg couldn't help the jealousy that seemed to dig into him. No one had ever kept him around, or wanted him for more than a short while.

The thought of losing Duncan felt worse than losing anyone he'd ever been with before.

A sweet smelling blue drink was placed in front of him and he looked up to frown at the bartender. "I didn't order this!" he yelled over the music.

The bartender smiled, and the name on his nametag seemed to sparkle in the overhead lights.

Draco.

“It’s from him,” he said, making Grigg turn to look.

It was Lucas.

Grigg’s heart skipped a beat as Lucas raised up a bottle of beer from across the bar, and smiled to do the same with the drink. He took a sip, the sweetness making him feel a little better, and when Lucas got up to come over he was shaking even before he got close.

What was he gonna say?

Lucas got closer, the crowd a little bit much, and when he sat down Grigg didn’t relax. If anything his nerves got worse.

“It’s good to see you again,” Lucas said, leaning in close, “I didn’t think I would.”

“Um…yeah, me too. I’m sorry about the job.”

Lucas looked at his beer, nodding. “I’m not the ‘guard’ type, really, so I should’ve expected it.”

“I mean…”

“If there’s any other jobs there though…maybe I’ll try again?”

Grigg frowned. “I don’t think my boss is gonna be hiring any more alphas anytime soon, not with so many omegas.”

Lucas scoffed, picking at the label on his beer, “Wants you all to himself, huh?”

“What? No! It’s…it’s complicated, and…”

“I was joking, Grigg. It’s fine. I’ve got applications pending all over town. I’ll be fine.”

They were both quiet, and the loudness only seemed to get worse. He hated this part, the small talk and first impressions. Grigg tried not to think of how easy it had been when he got alone with Duncan at the park, how much he’d wanted more but Duncan didn’t.

It wasn’t something to think about now.

Lucas was obviously interested in him, and really why shouldn’t he try to pursue this?

Lucas leaned in again and his scent made Grigg’s nose wrinkle. “You look great tonight,” he said, smiling.

Grigg felt sick to his stomach suddenly. “Thank you, I…I need to use the restroom. I’ll be back.”

He practically ran off, not sure what was wrong with him, and found the crowded bathroom with difficulty but pushed his way inside. There was loud music mixed amongst the voices as he stood at the sink, and he splashed water on his face as he looked into the mirror.

Why had he reacted like that?

A loud moan made him close his eyes, and he took several deep breaths to calm down.

He wanted to go back out there, but the very idea made him feel strange.

“Grigg?”

Grigg turned fast, and saw Lee coming out of a stall. He was pink cheeked, stank of alpha, and had obviously been recently kissed.

“Hey, I…”

He put his hand on Grigg’s cheek. “You ok?”

Grigg forced a smile. “Yeah, I just…I got nervous. Lucas is out there.”

“Lucas?”

“The guy from the library, you know with the glasses?”

Laughter, followed by a loud whack, made them both turn to see Adam coming out with the alpha Lee had stolen earlier. “My friends! Look at how they wait for me! Go on now,” he said to the alpha, “Get your pants up, love!”

Lee laughed, and Grigg blushed as he looked away.

“I’m ok,” he repeated, “I just…I needed air.”

“In a crowded bar bathroom?”

Grigg didn't say a word as he left them both, annoyed that they were being so worried, and headed back to the bar where he'd left Lucas. He pushed his way through the crowd, ignoring the upset he felt the closer he got, and was almost to the bar when he saw no one there.

Lucas had gone.

He sighed, putting his hand on the bar, and leaned forward.

"Damnitt," he whispered, blinking back tears.

"Grigg! What's wrong with you?"

He spun around fast, frustrated. "EVERYTHING!" he yelled, "EVERYTHING IS WRONG WITH ME AND NO ONE WANTS ME! NO ONE!"

Grigg ran out of the bar in tears, hating himself more than ever, and didn't look back. He kept running, knowing the library lot wasn't that far, but finally stopped about a block from the bar.

He took several breaths, chest aching, and wiped at his cheeks.

Tonight had only made him realize how much he wanted someone, now more than ever, and knowing that might never happen made him want to give up entirely. He started to walk, whole body aching, and didn't even acknowledge Second Adam and Lee when they yelled his name.

"GRIGG!" Lee yelled, grabbing his arm.

"Why the hell did you not look back at us?" Second Adam growled, "We were calling your name!"

Grigg's lip quivered as he shook his head. "Just go," he whispered, "Just go back, and have fun, just…"

Lee pulled him into a hug and he closed his eyes.

"What happened?"

"I blew it," he mumbled, "Someone who actually wants me, who bought me a drink and was being nice and I…I blew it. He was gone, and…"

"The glasses alpha?" Second Adam asked.

Grigg sniffled. "Y..yeah."

"Well, he wasn't all that handsome. Not really."

"You said he was," Grigg laughed, smiling at him.

"What do I know? I just let an alpha with the world's tiniest prick try to knot me in the bar. He was hot, obviously, but what a waste of my night."

All three of them laughed and Grigg wiped his eyes as he sat up. Lee put an arm around his waist as they headed for the library lot.

"We really should've just stayed at the library and got drunk."

"Will wouldn't approve."

“So? That wet blanket wouldn’t…”

They all paused when they saw Will’s car in the lot with theirs.

“Didn’t he go home?”

They all looked at each other. “I’m pretty sure he did. Right?”

Second Adam looked around, and then gasped. “Look!” he hissed, grabbing Griggs arm.

There was a very expensive, and very familiar car parked in the second lot.

“You don’t think…?”

All three of them ran to the door, the lights on low and hoping to see inside. They couldn’t see much of anything, though there was a light on in Will’s office and some shadows.

“You really think he’d let Hannibal in after close? He hates him, he…”

“He doesn’t hate him,” Grigg sighed, “He…fuck, I can’t deal with this tonight.”

He pulled away from the door, and felt worse than ever.

So now Will might have someone too?

When would this end?

“Grigg…”

He smiled over his shoulder at Lee. “Let me know how it goes, ok? I’m going home.”

“As soon as you drive off they’ll know someone is here.”

“Then you’d better get a good hiding spot.”

Lee smiled. “Call me when you get home.”

“I will.”

Grigg got into his car, buckled in, and started everything up as he watched Lee and Second Adam hide. Will didn’t come to the door, thankfully, and when he pulled away they both waved.

He turned on the radio and sang along to “That No Alpha Blues” when it came on the satellite which was one of his go to ‘I suck at mating’ songs. Grigg pulled up to his house in tears, wiping everything away, and parked in his driveway before grabbing the mail.

The house was quiet when he got inside, always was, and he tossed the mail on the table to find something to eat. Half a bag of chips and dip later he got up for a bottle of water only to pause when he saw a small package on his table.

It must’ve been in with the mail.

He picked the box up, twirling it in his fingers, and tore at the paper.

The white box inside seemed almost like a jewelry box, but who would be sending him jewelry? No one important knew where he lived, other than his friends and sisters.

He took off the top and frowned when he pulled out a silver necklace with an Omega Man symbol on it.

Grigg shook his head.

“No, he couldn’t.”

Duncan didn’t know where he lived, and he wouldn’t send him something like this. He looked for a note but found none, and pulled out his phone to call his sister Cat.

“It’s eleven o’clock at night, Grigg, so you’d better need to hide a body because I have to work in the morning.”

“Sorry,” he sighed, staring at the necklace, “I…I got a package.”

“So?”

“It’s a necklace,” he said, his voice shaking, “Did you send me an early birthday present?”

Cat scoffed. “Why would I do that? Have I ever done that? Also when was the last time you asked for jewelry?”

Grigg ran his thumb over the omega man symbol. “Never.”

“So why would I *ever* send you a necklace?” she asked, then paused, “Wait, is it a mating gift?”

He blushed. “What? No, it’s…no!”

“Oh yeah, that sounded VERY convincing little brother. Let’s get Julie and Hannah on the line to see if they…”

“Cat stop!” he said, blushing, “It’s not a mating gift.”

“You don’t sound convinced.”

Grigg opened the clasp and put it around his neck. He laid his hand on the pendant and felt oddly warm.

“An alpha, a friend…gave me a comic the other day.”

“And?”

“It’s the symbol for the comic.”

“Grigg…”

He shook his head. “He doesn’t know where I live.”

“You’re sure?”

“Absolutely.”

“Then maybe it’s someone new!” she said, yawning, “Look on the bright side, Grigg! Not all alphas are like Jocelyn.”

He smiled. “Maybe, I…I’m sorry I woke you up.”

She sighed. “It’s fine, I’ve missed you. You know?”

“I know. Give my sisters hugs for me?”

“I will. Goodnight, Grigg.”

“Goodnight, Cat.”

Grigg ended the call, and pulled off his shirt to head for the shower. Tonight’s scents and sounds needed to be gone from him completely, and as he got under the spray he felt better than he had all day.

The necklace stayed on, flat against his skin, and when he climbed into bed that night he kept his hand against it.

Whoever it was that had sent it…he wished he could thank them.

It was a wonderful end to a shitty night.

Grigg fell asleep with his hand still touching the symbol, and woke up to his cell phone ringing. He grabbed the phone, wiping his eyes, and barely got out a word before Lee yelled in his ear.

“WE CANNOT FIND ADAM! YOU NEED TO GET HERE NOW!”

He shot up. “What?”

“He won’t answer his phone, and you have the only key to his apartment. He’s NEVER late for work, Grigg. NOT EVER. Second Adam is there now trying to get someone to let him in because even Will is worried.”

Grigg got out of bed, scrambling to find clothes.

“I’m sorry, I…I don’t usually miss my alarm.”

“JUST GO! I’M ABOUT TEN SECONDS FROM CALLING THE COPS!”

Lee ended the call, and Grigg grabbed some clothes from his dresser, not bothering to see if they were wrinkled. He ran to his car, and called Adam’s cell phone.

It rang.

And rang.

And rang.

Oh god.

He’d told them all not to worry last night.

What if something terrible happened to Adam?

Chapter 6

The whole drive to Adam's apartment Grigg kept calling, but not once did Adam pick up the phone. He was in tears when he got there, parking in the lot despite knowing he might get a ticket, and ran to the door but saw no one.

Where was Second Adam?

He used his key, running inside, and heard pounding from above him even two floors below.

"OPEN UP THIS FUCKING DOOR NOW!"

Grigg ran up the stairs, terrified, and found Second Adam banging on Adam's door.

"I SWEAR TO BLOODY FUCK IF YOU DON'T OPEN…"

"I'm here!" Grigg said, breathless, "I'm…"

Second Adam glared at him, snatching the keys. "It's about *bloody* time, you're lucky I love you Grigg dear or you'd be getting beaten in the face."

"I'm sorry, I didn't…"

The door opened, and they both paused when they smelled it.

Heat.

Adam was in heat.

They both looked at each other.

"That *fucking* knothead, I SWEAR I WILL KILL HIM!" Second Adam yelled, running for Adam's bedroom.

They threw open the door, ready to defend Adam's honor, and froze.

Adam was flat on his back, whimpering, covered in sweat and deep in the throes of heat.

Nigel was holding an artificial knot, and brushing the sweat from his forehead as he sobbed.

"It's alright, Darling, it's…"

He turned to glare at the two of them.

"Happy now?" he growled, "You've made him worse."

Second Adam backed up. "I…I'm sorry? We…you didn't…"

Nigel scoffed. “Didn’t what? Shove my cock in him because he went into a surprise heat? I may be a fucking asshole but I’m not a monster. He…”

“Please, Nigel,” Adam sobbed, “Please, I’ll be good. I’m so…so good…just…”

Nigel turned, ignoring them both, and leaned in to kiss Adam's cheek softly. “You’re doing so good, Darling, so fucking wonderful. You are. But…we can’t. Not this time. Alright?”

“But I want to, I…” he sobbed, “I’m so wet, Nigel I…I want you so much! Please fuck me! Please, please, please! It hurts!”

Nigel pressed his forehead to Adam’s. “I know, Star,” he whispered, “I know.”

Grigg’s chest ached as he watched them. “I…I’m sorry, I…we were just worried.”

He lifted his head and sighed. “I know,” he said, “But…he’s safe with me. I’d never…I won’t hurt him.”

Grigg nodded, blinking back tears. “I know,” he whispered, “I can see that. Thank you for taking care of him.”

He left the room fast, shutting the door, and sighed.

“Color me surprised,” Second Adam said, “I honestly did not expect that, did you?”

Grigg sniffled, and walked toward the door.

“The heat or…Nigel?”

“Both.”

They locked the door behind them, and headed down the stairs together.

“I did,” Grigg mumbled, “I…I’ve seen him around Adam, and…I’ve talked to him alone. He’s rough, but I don’t think he’s a bad man.”

“Or,” Second Adam said, “He’s a bad man but the only person he’d never be bad to is Adam?”

Grigg smiled. “Maybe.”

They walked out the front door together, and Second Adam sighed.

“Now we have to go back to work after seeing that. Will owes us hazard pay.”

Grigg bumped his shoulder. “You know, someday you’ll turn out to secretly be a romantic and we’ll all be shocked.”

Second Adam gasped, clutching his chest. “ME? How DARE YOU?”

“So…you call Will and I call Lee?”

“How about we switch that? I don’t want the third degree from Dad.”

Grigg sighed. “Fine. I’ll see you there.”

He took out his phone and dialed Will as he got into his car.

“DID YOU FIND HIM?”

Grigg sighed.

“Yeah, we found him.”

“And?”

“He’s in heat,” Grigg whispered, “With Nigel.”

“WHAT? THAT FUCKING…”

“No,” he corrected, “Nigel is there, *with him.* He’s using an artificial knot, and…he’s not gonna…not with Adam.”

Will was quiet. “You’re sure?”

“Absolutely.”

He sighed. “Well, that’s…that’s good I guess.”

“Yeah.”

“You have the day off, so if you…”

“I’ll take Adam’s shift,” he said, “It’s not like I had anything else to do.”

“Grigg, you don’t have to.”

He started his car. “No, but…Adam needs the time and…there’s no Nigel waiting for me at home so…”

“Ok,” Will said, sounding odd, “I…I’ll see you soon.”

“Yeah, bye.”

He ended the call and pulled out of the lot, feeling oddly worse than he had felt going there.

Adam found his person.

That much was obvious.

But the jealousy outweighed Grigg’s happiness for him. He couldn’t help but wish it was him, laying there with someone to be so good to him, and the tears that filled his eyes at the thought made him feel worse.

He wasn't going to have that, he knew, but the glimpse of it just once made it hard to fathom. Grigg touched the necklace, feeling a bit better as the cool metal hit his palm. Whoever gave him this cared about making him happy.

Who cared if it was kind of creepy that they knew where he lived?

They wanted to make him happy.

Grigg clung to that as he drove, and parked in his usual spot getting out in time to see Second Adam talking up a hot alpha by a corvette. He rolled his eyes, and headed inside just as Lee ran up to him.

"Is it really true?"

"Yep," he said, "Nigel is a good guy."

"Good to Adam, maybe," Lee chuckled, "I've seen him steal chairs from old people with canes to sit closest to Adam's desk."

Grigg laughed. "Ok, I'll amend my statement. Good to *Adam*."

"Better," Lee said, following him, "I thought you had the day off?"

"I'm filling in for Adam."

"I could've done that."

"Yeah, well…"

"Grigg."

He sighed. "I need to have something to do today, ok?"

Lee frowned. "Ok. You…are you ok?"

Grigg forced a smile, and grabbed the pendant tight. "I'm fine."

Lee moved his hand. "What's this? This is new?"

He blushed. "Um…yeah."

"What's with the blushing? Is it a gift?"

Grigg smiled. "I found it in my mailbox last night."

Lee frowned. "In your mailbox? That's…kinda creepy."

"No, it's…it's from that comic I like. You know, the one that Duncan gave me the…"

"Wait, what?"

Grigg blushed, stuffing the necklace into his shirt. “Nevermind.”

“No, wait just a minute!”

He rushed to Adam’s chair, grateful that no one was in the library this early, and sat down.

Lee leaned over his desk. “Did Duncan GIVE you this?”

“What? No!”

“You just said he gave you something.”

“Not this. It was a comic, which is from this, but…”

Lee laughed. “Grigg, c’mon!”

“Lee, just drop it!”

He put his hands over his face. “I can’t deal with this! You’re…HE GAVE YOU THE COMIC AND THEN YOU GET THE NECKLACE FROM THE COMIC?”

“It’s not FROM THE COMIC, LEE? It’s the symbol of the…”

“What the hell is going on out here?”

They both turned to see Will standing not two feet away.

“Um…”

“Grigg is being courted,” Lee laughed, “And he’s too stupid to realize it.”

“What? No, I’m not!”

“Grigg, he…”

“Okay, just STOP! People are coming in, and the two of you can argue about this later. And where is Second Adam?”

“Um…I saw him hitting on someone outside.”

Will sighed.

“I…I can’t deal with this. Not today.”

“Why not today?”

Will blinked. “What?”

“You said *not today*. What’s going on today?”

“I’m not…after all the Adam stuff, and…”

Lee and Grigg looked at each other. “You made it seem like you were talking about something else. What were you talking about, Boss?”

Will blushed. “I’m….I have work to do. Just…try not to burn the place down and…Grigg, I need you to show Elias around when he gets out of the bathroom.”

Grigg frowned. “No one else has done it?”

“Second Adam refuses, and Elias is afraid of Lee.”

Lee laughed.

“I have to run the desk.”

“We’ll close the desk for today, just…please?”

“Fine.”

He nodded once, looking at them both for a minute before nearly running back to his room. Lee leaned in close to Grigg. “He’s been like that since I got here,” he said, “I don’t know what’s up but maybe it was whatever reason he was here late last night.”

Grigg frowned. “You think?”

“I mean…we saw how nice that car was. It wasn’t Hannibal’s usual, but…who else?”

They both looked at Will’s closed door, and Grigg’s stomach clenched again.

Now Will too?

He sighed.

“We don’t know that for sure yet.”

“Yeah, well…we’ll see,” Lee sighed, “I…oh look my desk is swamped with little ones. I…”

“Yeah, it’s fine.”

“Have fun today with Elias,” Lee teased, “Tell him I said hello.”

Grigg laughed. “I will.”

He watched Lee go, and was happy for once that Lee was not the mating type. His best friend would be a bachelor forever, and that was what he clung to, along with Second Adam. He’d chosen well in the friend department as an omega with no prospects.

Elias came out of the bathroom twenty minutes later, and looked entirely lost near Adam’s desk as Grigg helped someone at the computer area. He finished up a few minutes after, and found him near tears standing in the exact same place he’d been when he came out.

“Hey Elias, I’m…”

“You weren’t here,” he said, “I waited, and you…”

“I was helping someone out, I’m sorry. Will told me to show you around?”

Elias sniffled. “Yes, but I’m very capable of doing that on my own. I’m extremely smart, you know, and very handsome.”

Grigg smiled. “Oh?”

He frowned, showing off his tan suit that looked like it was from the eighties. “Don’t you see my nice clothes? They’re very fashionable. I’ve had to say no to TEN omegas today. TEN.”

Grigg resisted the urge to laugh. “Wow, that’s…something else. Can I show you the study rooms?”

“Fine,” Elias mumbled, “But I could find them on my own.”

“Oh, I’m sure.”

He spent the next few hours showing Elias the different areas of the library, and listening to him tell lies that were so completely obvious but kind of adorable. Though there was one weird thing that kept happening.

Elias had to use the bathroom at least eight times in the span of four hours. He looked extremely uncomfortable just as he was about to go, and rushed off only to be gone for a few minutes.

And when he returned he smelled like he’d just…had a good time.

They parted ways at lunch, and Grigg went right to Will’s office. He knocked, and Will called out from inside.

“Come in!”

He came in, sat down, and tried to say it as nice as possible.

“So, I had my orientation with Elias.”

“Yeah? How’d that go?”

“Um, fine,” he said, blushing, “He lies a lot, but I think it’s just self esteem issues. He’s pretty harmless, and a bit of a jerk but in a sweet way.”

Will narrowed his eyes. “And…”

“And…um…I think he jerks off.”

He paused. “Um, what?”

“He uses the bathroom a lot,” Grigg said, “And comes back smelling like…”

“Come.”

“Yes, and…he doesn’t say anything or look weirded out.”

Will sighed.

“Fuck.”

“You said he had a condition? So maybe…”

“He just said he had to use the bathroom a lot because of it, he didn’t…fuck. How the fuck did…get him in here.”

“Will, maybe it’s just a medical thing.”

“What kind of…”

“You have no idea what he might have, and he can sue you for firing him based on it.”

Will rubbed his temples. “Still, I have to talk to him.”

“Ok, I…just…be nice.”

“I’m always nice.”

Grigg sighed. “Be *nicer*.”

“Fine.”

Grigg left the office, and went to the back to find Elias who was sitting alone at the table eating sandwich.

“Um, Elias?”

“Yes?”

“Will needs to see you.”

He blinked. “He does? It’s my lunch time.”

“Yeah, I know, but he really needs to see you.”

He glared at Grigg. “You had better not steal my food.”

“I…won’t.”

“No one else either.”

Grigg shook his head. “I’ll stay and watch it.”

He glared at him for a minute before grabbing all his food and running out.

Grigg sighed, and went to the fridge hoping he'd left a frozen dinner in the freezer. Thankfully he had, and put it in the microwave hoping he'd get out before Elias came back.

If he came back.

He waited three minutes, staring at the door, and was about to leave when Elias back back into the room with tears running down his face.

"Elias?"

Elias marched up to him. "I have a *condition*," he said, his lip trembling, "And…I hate it, I hate it very much and I…I cannot help my condition and you're *horrible* for telling on me. You're a HORRIBLE HORRIBLE OMEGA!"

Grigg felt tears fill his eyes. "I…"

"I hope you NEVER find a mate, and no alpha is STUCK WITH YOU!"

He ran out of the room, and Grigg suddenly burst into tears.

Grigg clutched at his necklace and sat on the floor while he couldn't stop sobbing.

"GRIGG? WHAT THE FUCK?"

He felt Second Adam hug him tight, and clutched him.

"What did that asshole do?"

Grigg sniffled. "I…I didn't…"

"What did he do, huh?"

He let out a whimper. "I…I told on him, and he…he got upset, I…I.."

Second Adam frowned. "Told on him?"

"He was…oh god I shouldn't tell you."

"No, you had BETTER bloody tell me or I'm gonna punch that fucking knothead in the jaw."

"He has a medical condition," Grigg whispered, his voice shaking as he stared down at the floor, "And he…has to jerk off all the time. I…I don't know what it's called but…"

Second Adam froze. "What?"

"He…"

"He's…that…is brilliant."

Grigg lifted his head. "What?"

Second Adam smiled. “I thought he was just…disgusting and ugly. Now you tell me he’s constantly horny? That…oh this is like Christmas.”

“Adam, no,” he said, trying to stand, “It’s not funny, it…”

Second Adam winked, holding out his hand to help Grigg up. “I didn’t say it was funny, Griggy,” he said, shaking his head, “I said it was *brilliant*. You’re telling me there’s an alpha who is constantly hard and needs a good wanking? Sign me the bloody fuck up.”

“Adam…”

He pointed both his hands at Grigg. “You…are…the best. Thank you for this.”

Grigg went to run after him, and stopped.

What did it matter?

Elias couldn’t get someone like Second Adam on a good day. There was no harm in letting Adam show him a good time. He turned his food on again, leaned against the counter, and wiped the tears from his face.

The day so far was exhausting, but…it could be worse.

He ate in silence, and came out to Adam standing in front of Elias obviously trying to catch his attention.

Elias was blushing, looked indignant, and Grigg could only smile.

He went to check in with Will.

“Hey, everything ok?”

Will sighed.

“I told him to try to at least not smell like it,” he mumbled, “It’s…medical. I can’t fire him for it.”

“I figured,” he said, “He…got upset with me earlier about telling.”

“I didn’t tell him you told me.”

“Yeah, well…”

“Everything ok?”

“Yeah,” Grigg said, “I…um…I started crying and Second Adam came in to see what was wrong.”

“Grigg, are you ok? Really? Cuz I can fire him for harassing you.”

“No, it’s…um…I sort…”

Will froze.

“You didn’t.”

Grigg blushed. “He’s harmless!” he said, “What’s the worst that could happen?”

“Do you not remember the orgy, Grigg? Cuz I do!”

Grigg smiled. “Hey, if anything…he’ll show Elias a good time.”

Will sighed. “I…god…today of all days. This is a disaster.”

Grigg frowned. “What’s today?”

“What?”

“You keep…”

Will blushed, and turned his chair away. “Nothing, it’s nothing. Just…go to the desk for the rest of the day. Stay away from Elias, and keep your mouth shut.”

“I…ok.”

Grigg left Will’s office and headed back to the computer area. He helped two more people at the terminals before going back to the desk, and was about to sit when he froze.

There was a gift on the seat.

He lifted it up, and saw his name written.

Grigg looked around, confused, and opened the top.

It was a replica coin of the one Omega Man gave to Alpha Lad on their first meeting. He smiled, looking around, and sat in the chair.

He flipped the coin in his hand, grinned, and sat back.

Maybe today wasn’t so bad after all.

Chapter 7

The gifts continued.

By the night of computer class he had been given a total of four gifts: the necklace, the coin, a warm purple and red scarf - the same colors as Omega Man, and an even warmer purple and red blanket. Grigg was in a great mood by the night of the class, though he was a bit out of his element taking over for Adam it wouldn't be that hard.

There were eleven people signed up for class, mostly unknowns - though Nigel was on the list Grigg knew he wouldn't be coming, but there was one that made him a bit more excited to be there.

Duncan Vizla.

Grigg had been given the names when Will asked him just days ago, and his immediate 'yes' made Will ask if he was sure he was ok to take over.

He was very sure.

The requirement for class was to bring your own laptop, which every person who came in seemed to have but one.

"Elias?" Grigg asked, coming over, "What are you doing here?"

Elias was beet red when he walked over to him, not looking up. "You were not supposed to be here. The teacher is named Adam."

"Yeah, I know, but Adam is on leave…you didn't sign up for this class."

He watched Elias's lip quiver. "I…I thought it was free."

"It is free, it's just…"

Elias looked up at him in tears. "I apologize for being so rude to you."

Grigg sighed, smiling. "It's ok."

"No, it's *not* ok. I was very rude, and I need to apologize. Good alphas apologize to omegas."

Grigg smiled, and put a hand on his shoulder. "You're forgiven," he said, "But you really needed to bring a computer with you. I don't have any here but my own."

He looked even more sad. "I…I don't have a computer yet," he said, "But I'm saving for the *best* one, and I'm…I'll have the very *best*."

He smiled. "I'm sure, but still…" he paused, "You know, what? You can come up and sit with me. I'll let you use mine, ok?"

Elias sniffled. “I can?”

“Yeah,” he said, “I mean why let it go to waste?”

He got up from his chair and they walked to the front where Grigg moved another chair by the big desk. Another few people came in, a few alphas by the scent of them, and when Elias sat down he was about to sit when a scent hit him hard.

Duncan.

Grigg looked up, frozen, and Duncan stared for a moment before he sat way at the back of the conference room. He blinked, letting out a long breath, and couldn’t look away as he watched the alpha take out a computer from a case.

“What’s wrong with you? Why aren’t you sitting down?”

He blinked, and saw Elias frowning at him. Grigg blushed and sat down. “Sorry, I just…”

“It’s that alpha in the back of the room, yes? Is he going to bother you? I can tell him to go, I’m very strong and intimidating.”

Grigg smiled, and opened up his laptop connecting it to the projector. “I’m fine, but thank you.”

Elias puffed up his chest and glared across the room. “He’s staring at you,” he said, his voice a little loud, “Is he interested in you sexually?”

Grigg covered his face. “Elias, please quiet down. I don’t want my life to be on broadcast for the entire room. Ok?”

He frowned. “Ok,” he whispered, “But I’m watching him. He’s very suspicious with that strange eyepatch.”

Grigg frowned. “I don’t think it’s strange,” he said, “It’s…it gives him character.”

Elias turned to look at him. “Is that what omegas like? Eyepatches?”

Grigg smiled. “Maybe some of them do, I don’t know, I just…it doesn’t seem strange to me. I…I have to start class so we’ll talk later.”

“Ok.”

He got up then, and walked in front of the desk. “Good evening everyone and welcome to Computers class. I’m taking over for Adam tonight, so if you’d all sit and take out your laptops that would be great.”

The few stragglers who hadn’t yet found a seat did, and he noticed a few alphas eyeing him with interest. Grigg went to close the door, looking out at Will who was still hanging around the inner library. The study room didn’t hold many, maybe thirty at most, and he was

surprised there was nearly half that here now. He nodded to Will and went to close the door when someone ran in.

“I’m coming! Please don’t close the door!”

Grigg blinked as Lucas came running in, looking disheveled, and his smile was wide when he saw Grigg.

“Hello Grigg, I didn’t…I thought someone named Adam was teaching tonight?”

“I…were you here for the last class?”

“No, I…I wasn’t but…I’m familiar enough I don’t think that matters does it?”

Grigg shook his head. “No, I…no that’s fine have a seat.”

Lucas smiled again, patting his shoulder as he eyed him with interest. “Thank you. I’m excited to see what you’ll have to teach me.”

Grigg blushed. “I…um…that’s…good.”

He patted his shoulder one more time before he turned toward the seats, and Grigg couldn’t help but look over at Duncan.

Duncan’s glare at Lucas made him frown, and he was glad that Lucas sat near the front though Duncan didn’t seem to be.

Was he jealous that Lucas touched him?

Grigg put a hand on his shoulder, frowning more, and forced a smile as he shut the door.

“I…I’m Grigg Harris,” he said, “I’m actually pretty familiar with computers, I created some software a few years ago that I’m not really at liberty to talk about. Though I’m sure many of you use it.”

Someone raised their hand.

“Yes?”

“If you can’t tell us why bring it up? Is it an omega thing, wanting to brag?”

A few alphas snickered, and Grigg blushed. “I…well no, I just…”

“I mean, the other one wasn’t so braggy he just got the point,” the same alpha said, “I mean, really we don’t need your life story buddy. We just…”

“If you’d just shut your damn mouth and listen that’s what he’s trying to do,” Duncan growled, making the alpha freeze, “If you can’t shut it, I’ll come over there and shut it for you.”

The alpha turned red and looked down at the table, not saying a word.

Grigg smiled at Duncan who nodded.

Class went smoothly after that.

He went through a bit more than basics, mostly program stuff and showed how to make a video with a webcam. Grigg was surprised not one alpha made a joke about cam videos on porn sites, though he was sure Duncan's threat had a lot to do with that.

Elias asked a lot of questions, and Grigg was patient with him all class showing even some basic stuff he should've already known by now. He was happy when it ended, and the class started to empty out.

Lucas came over, and Elias glared from his seat.

"Thanks for the lesson," he said, frowning, "I…I learned a lot."

"You're welcome, I…"

"Grigg, I have more questions!" Elias said loudly, making Grigg blush.

"Elias, just a…"

"It's very important!"

Lucas smiled. "Duty calls. I'll see you around, Grigg."

"Yeah."

He watched Lucas go, and glared at Elias when he got back to the desk. "Class is over, Elias. If you need help I can show you at work tomorrow."

Elias frowned. "You seemed distressed so I was trying to help."

"I…I wasn't."

"It didn't look that way to me."

Grigg sighed. "Just…I don't always need to be rescued. Okay?"

"Okay, but…"

Grigg looked out to check who else was left and frowned when he saw the two omegas in class were over by Duncan. One was a pretty blonde woman, and another an older man with a buzzcut. They seemed to be trying to get his attention, and Grigg wanted to scratch their eyes out.

"You're leaking," Elias said, getting up, "I can smell it."

He blushed. "I'm not, and it's rude to bring it up."

Grigg didn't feel any reason to be slick right now, so he wasn't sure what Elias meant.

“I didn’t mean slick wetness,” he whispered, “I meant your omega scent. It’s not a good one either.”

He frowned. “I…I didn’t realize.”

Elias patted his hand. “It’s alright, the man with the eyepatch didn’t talk to them long. They’ve gone.”

Grigg looked up to see Duncan putting his laptop away with no one around.

“I….”

Elias frowned. “If you’re sexually interested, I’ll leave but if you’re not I’ll stay. You weren’t interested in the other one, that’s why I was helping.”

He blushed.

Wasn’t he?

Lucas was handsome, nice, and seemed to like him. And if it didn’t seem like he was interested, then why did he keep trying to be? He looked at Duncan again, and his heart skipped a beat.

“I…you can go.”

Elias got up from his chair. “Thank you for being a good teacher, Grigg. I’m sorry for what I told you. I wish you luck on your mating.”

“I’m not…”

He left without letting Grigg explain, and he put his stuff away ready to bolt.

The last time he’d been alone with Duncan still hung fresh in his mind, and he wasn’t sure if he could take another rejection. He had his laptop in his bag, and rushed from behind his desk not looking up when he crashed right into the solid muscle of Duncan’s chest.

“Oh! I…I’m sorry I…”

He looked up and Duncan reached out to gently lead him back. “It’s alright, I…I should’ve announced myself.”

Grigg swallowed past the lump in his throat. “It’s…it’s alright. I should’ve watched where I was going I…”

Duncan still had a hand on his wrist, and he rubbed his thumb across making Grigg shiver.

“I was just coming to see if you’re alright. Earlier, with that man…”

Grigg licked his lips. “Man?”

“The rude one in the beginning of class. No one should talk to omegas that way.”

He sighed. “I…thank you. I didn’t really know what to do and you…”

Duncan nodded, and rubbed his wrist some more. “I wasn’t about to let him talk to you that way.”

“Duncan…”

He let go of Grigg’s wrist. “I should go.”

“Wait!”

Duncan froze. “Grigg…”

“The man, at the park. The one…whose arm you broke.”

Duncan looked away. “He was going to hurt you.”

“I know that, and I just wanted to say thank you. You ran off so fast…”

He sighed. “I…I didn’t want…Grigg, you…I’m not…very good at this.”

“At this?”

“At interacting with people,” he mumbled, “Or really omegas in particular.”

Grigg frowned. “You seem to be doing ok to me.”

“With you, it’s easier because…” he looked up, “I can’t seem to *stop* wanting to interact. I…I…”

Grigg held his breath. “Duncan, I…”

He stepped away, letting go of Grigg’s wrist. “I should go.”

“No, wait! You…”

Duncan shook his head. “Goodnight, Grigg.”

Grigg’s eyes filled with tears as he watched him leave, and he didn’t follow. There was no reason to, not really, and he sat back against the desk with his head in his hands.

A minute later he heard a knock at the door and looked up to see Will.

“Are you ok?”

He shook his head. “I don’t understand what’s wrong with me. Why doesn’t he want me?”

“Grigg, that’s not…”

“He’s so nice to me, and he…he protected me, but he doesn’t want me but acts like he wants me. It’s so confusing, and I can’t…I can’t keep going in circles.”

Will walked up to Grigg and put hands on his shoulders. “I’ve seen him look at you, Grigg. It’s not that he doesn’t want you, it’s that he…doesn’t want to burden you with whatever mess he’s got going on. He’s trying to protect you. It’s shitty, and he’s going about it all wrong but…”

Grigg crumbled and fell into Will’s chest as the tears fell down his face. “But…but…what if I don’t care? What if…what if I *know* he’s…supposed to be mine?”

Will sighed. “I don’t know what to tell you. I just know how it is on my end, Grigg.”

Grigg wrapped arms around Will’s middle and felt comforted by his scent.

“You’re…you’re a good alpha, Will.”

Will scoffed. “Tell that to my father. He thinks an alpha is supposed to be strong, and fight and…”

Grigg shook his head, and looked up at him. “You are strong, Will. And you…you’ve never treated omegas like less than you. Whoever ends up your mate will be lucky to have you.”

Will smiled. “I don’t think that’s in the cards for me,” he mumbled, “I’m more of a lone wolf.”

Grigg pulled back, laughing. “Keep telling yourself that.”

He wiped his cheeks and Will sighed. “Are you ok?”

“I’m fine.”

“I can walk you to your car.”

“Ok. Thank you.”

Grigg gathered up his things, tired as hell already, and let Will walk him outside to his car. He smiled when he opened the door.

“Thanks Will.”

“You’re welcome. Have a good night.”

“I will.”

He got into his car and locked the door, turning to grab his seatbelt when he saw a rose on the seat beside him. Grigg picked it up, hands shaking, and sniffed it.

Another gift.

Grigg took a deep breath, and smelled the faint scent of alpha but couldn’t place them with so little go go on. He didn’t see a note, or anything at all but he smiled as he pulled away from the lot.

At least there was someone out there who wanted him.

And if this was a courting?

He was sure that when it got to the reveal of just who it was he'd be more than ready to say yes.

Chapter 8

Grigg was off the Monday after Computer Class, which is why when Lee called him around noon he was still in his pajamas playing one of his favorite video games. He paused the game as he answered with a smile.

"Miss me already?"

"Second Adam didn't call you yet?"

He frowned. "Um, no?"

"Oh boy, oh boy…"

Grigg sat up straight. "What's wrong?"

"Adam's back from his heat."

"It's only been four days," Grigg mumbled, mentally doing the math, "I mean, he's had heats before and they're usually the full seven. Remember last month?"

He could hear Lee chewing on the other end. "Oh, I remember. Him coming back early isn't the problem, it's that he's been on edge all day. Yelling at people, smelling distressed, all the worst bits. And Nigel didn't show up *at all* . I thought they'd be mated by now, I mean…"

Grigg's chest ached. "Maybe it didn't go so well."

"He still smells the same, just angry and upset. I've tried talking to him but he's all snippy."

“I can try, maybe.”

“He likes you the most, so maybe you’ll get the details?”

Grigg sighed. “If it’s really personal, I’m not gonna just tell all of you.”

“Griggy, c’mon! I tell you *everything* !”

“Yeah, and I keep telling you to stop,” he laughed, “Lee, it’s Adam. He’s private most of the time and Nigel is the first person we’ve seen that he’s liked for real. Beth doesn’t count.”

“That *bitch* ,” Lee mumbled, slurping on something, “Fine. Just…maybe stop by later or call him. Second Adam has been giving Adam sweets all day in between flirting with Elias. It’s been one of those days and it’s only twelve.”

Grigg laughed. “If you guys need help, I can…”

“No, no, you keep your day off. Read some books, play computer games or whatever it is. Don’t worry. I…oh. I have to go, Grigg. I’ll call you later.”

“Ok, bye L…”

Lee ended the call fast and he frowned again staring at his phone before he set it down.

Grigg knew Adam was very private about his personal life, the little bits he’d let slip about Beth had made them hate the alpha without knowing her much at all, and his connection to Nigel had been silent at best.

What had happened during Adam’s heat?

He tried not to worry, but it soured his game so he just checked on some pending deliveries for the library and on a whim ordered a new couch for the backroom. No one had to know where it came from.

It wasn't the first time Grigg had "donated" to his coworkers, and it wouldn't be the last.

Grigg smiled as he opened up his email, and was deleting some unwanted messages when he spotted a familiar name.

Lucas.

Grigg opened the email and his stomach clenched at the words.

Grigg,

I'm aware that this may be a bit forward, but our paths have crossed many times now and I do believe there's a reason. I got your email from the library's directory, so I'm sorry if this is too much. I just would like to take you out to dinner sometime.

Disregard if you're not interested.

I have thick skin and can take the rejection.

Lucas

Grigg stared at the email, hands shaking, and was about to answer when a knock came to his door. He sighed and checked his video doorbell only to see someone set something on his porch before running off. Grigg got up and opened the door to see a thin envelope that he took into his hands.

He looked around, confused, and sniffed for some sort of scent.

Nothing.

He closed the door, ripped open the top, and pulled out three things.

A folded up piece of paper.

A daisy that looked like it had been smashed into a book.

And an eyepatch.

Grigg's heart beat wildly in his chest as he unfolded the paper.

Stay away from him if you know what's good for you.

There was nothing else written there, nothing at all, and Grigg suddenly was terrified more than he'd ever been before. Was someone threatening Duncan through him? He had no idea how to get a hold of him, none at all, and yet it was the only thing he wanted to do now.

Grigg's eyes filled with tears as he picked up the eyepatch, torn only on one side, and with no scent at all.

This wasn't Duncan's.

He put it to his nose anyway, shaking, and then went to get dressed. His fear didn't stop as he did, thoughts whirling away, and when he left the house he could only think of one place to go.

The fountain had been the only other place he'd seen Duncan outside of work, and as he went to the bench he hoped he'd see him again. Whoever was threatening him, Duncan, or both of them wouldn't hurt Grigg in front of all these people. He'd read enough comic books to know they'd rather not be seen by this many witnesses.

Grigg sat there for what felt like hours, lost in his thoughts, and hardly even noticed when someone joined him.

"No work today?"

He jumped, startled, and turned to Nigel who was lighting a cigarette.

"No."

"Ah."

The two of them were quiet for what felt like forever until Grigg spoke.

"About Adam…"

"It's none of your business what goes on with him and me," Nigel said, not looking at him.

Grigg frowned. "I just…I…he's my friend and I care about him. That's all."

Nigel took a deep drag and blew the smoke, tapping his foot as he stared out at the people around them. "You think I don't care about him?"

"No, but…"

He threw the cigarette to the ground, stepped on it, and turned to glare at Grigg.

"It's none of your fucking business, ok? Just…worry about your own problems."

Grigg was about to argue when Nigel took off fast, and he knew following would result in more trouble than he needed. He laid back on the bench and sighed. Things obviously hadn't gone well with Adam's heat, but he didn't think Nigel would hurt Adam.

Not at all.

He was about to get up and find something to eat from a vendor when his cell rang.

Lee again.

"Yeah?"

"You're not gonna believe this," he whispered, sounding like he was hiding, "But *both* your boyfriends are here."

Grigg frowned. "I don't have any boyfriends."

"Griggy, c'mon now…we both know you do."

He blushed. "Did they ask about me?"

"No, but Duncan keeps skulking around and the glasses one just keeps looking everywhere. It's kind of adorable. Can I have the second one? You don't need *two* alpha boyfriends, and

it’s been forever since I’ve had one that sweet looking. The things I’d do to that man…”

“Lee, I don’t have any boyfriends. Ok? You…you can do whatever you’d like.”

The words felt bitter in his mouth as he said them, and tears stung his eyes.

“Grigg…”

“N..not Duncan,” he whispered, “Just…”

“I’m sorry, Grigg, it was just a joke! I…”

Grigg hung up and raced to the nearest vendor, grabbing a popsicle. He knew now that he’d come to the fountain in hopes to see Duncan again.

He was so pathetic.

He got into his car and drove, not sure where he was going, and took every turn to get further away from everything. It got dark, but he couldn’t seem to stop as tears fell down his cheeks, and soon his gas light came on.

“Fuck,” he sniffed, wiping his face.

Grigg pulled out his phone and saw the nearest gas station was almost twenty minutes away.

He kept driving, hoping to see a house, but there was no one.

“Damnitt,” he growled, pulling out his phone.

It was almost seven o’clock, somehow he’d lost three hours.

He called Lee, whose phone went right to voicemail, as did everyone else’s.

His sisters lived too far away to do much, and as he kept driving the car got slower.

“Shit, shit, shit,” he cursed, looking around.

There was no one.

Absolutely no one.

His car died just short of the next stop sign, and Grigg sat there in tears. He pulled out his phone again, ready to call the police, and to his horror it wouldn’t turn on.

Had he left the GPS on?

He cried out, tossing the phone to the ground, and banged his hands on the steering wheel.

“Fuuuuck!”

Grigg realized the only thing he could do was walk and hope someone drove down this road, or he saw a house.

He got out, locking his car behind him, and started to walk. It was a terrible idea, he knew that, and ran risk of him being attacked by some terrible person who'd take advantage.

But there was nothing else he could do.

Grigg kept walking, getting tired, and was just about to sit down on the side of the road when a truck came driving up the road. He froze, unsure if he should flag them down, but it turned out he didn't have to. The truck pulled over, and in the dark he could only see a shape as someone hopped out.

"Do you need…."

He froze.

It was Duncan.

Duncan stopped short of him, looking just as surprised as Grigg was.

"I…I ran out of gas, and…my phone died. I…I didn't know what else to do."

Duncan came over then, putting his hands on Grigg's shoulders, and suddenly took off his own jacket. It wasn't cold, but the scent put Grigg at ease immediately.

"How long have you been walking?"

He shook his head. "I…I don't know."

Duncan sighed. "Come get in the car," he said, putting an arm around him, "I'll drive you up to my place and we'll get some gas."

Grigg leaned in, unsure if this was a dream, and Duncan all but lifted him up into the passenger's seat. He put his seatbelt on, eyes wide as Duncan came back, and they started to drive.

"You live out here?"

"Yes, it's…I like my privacy."

Grigg frowned. "I don't even know how I got here," he whispered, pulling Duncan's coat closer, "I just started to drive, and I…I…wait. If you live out here, why do you come to the library so far away?"

Duncan didn't look at him. "I like the selection better."

He frowned. "Oh."

They drove for another few minutes in silence, but the heat and the scent of Duncan helped calm Grigg down. His heart skipped a beat as they pulled into a long driveway, and the cabin-like house that was in front of him was beautiful.

"You have a nice house," he said.

"Thank you."

Duncan parked, and helped him out again without even asking. He didn't protest, the closeness something he knew he'd never get outside of this situation, and as they walked up the house he almost hoped some other disaster would keep him here.

"I don't know if you have a plug for your cellular phone, or…"

“In the car,” Grigg mumbled, blushing, “I didn’t…I…”

“It’s alright. We need to get you warmed up, and I’ll figure out the rest.”

Grigg resisted the urge to burst into tears at how nice Duncan was being, and as they walked inside the house was so full of his scent Grigg wanted to drown in it. Duncan helped him to the nearest couch and he sat down.

“Give me your keys.”

“I…”

He handed the keys over.

“I’m gonna make you some tea, and you’re just gonna sit here. Ok?”

Grigg nodded.

He left him again, and Grigg looked all over the room.

It was a room devoid of any kind of design or decoration, though there were knives on the walls hung up like trophies. Had Duncan used them?

Duncan returned with tea and crumbled up cookies on a plate.

Grigg smiled. “You didn’t have to do this.”

“Omegas like sweet things, and…you’ve been out there for god knows how long.”

He sniffled, and took a sip.

It was perfect.

“Thank you.”

Duncan nodded.

“I’ll be right back,” he said, “Just…don’t move and there’s a bathroom just down the hall. If you want more cookies they’re on the table in the kitchen.”

“Where are you going?”

“I’m gonna get your car.”

“I can come with!” Grigg said, standing, “I can…”

Duncan gently pushed him down on the couch again. “Stay, Grigg. Just stay here for me.”

“How are you gonna drive your car back?”

Duncan smiled. “I’ll figure something out.”

Grigg watched him go, heart beating wildly in his chest, and realized that was the first time he'd ever seen Duncan smile.

And it was because of him.

He took a bite of cookie and sat back, burying his face in Duncan's jacket.

Whatever twist of fate had brought him there tonight….he hoped it was for a good reason.

Anything else would break his heart for good.

Chapter 9

Grigg finished his tea and cookies not long after Duncan left him, and the sudden urge to find more made him get up from the couch. He slowly peeked into the dimly lit kitchen, and saw the bag of cookies sitting on the table.

There weren't many left so he only took one more, and looked around the kitchen for some sign of Duncan but found none. It was just as devoid of decoration as the living room, though one thing he noticed was the appliances were all stainless steel. Grigg walked over and touched all of them, an odd need making him unable to stop, and he found himself slowly creeping down the hallway into the bathroom.

Duncan's scent was strong there, and Grigg felt warm all over as he picked up a towel bringing it to his nose. He purred, rubbing his cheek against the fabric, and felt the telltale wetness of slick running down his thighs.

He blushed, letting it go, and headed back toward the living room hoping he'd calm down.

Duncan's coat was still on his shoulders, his scent all over it, and though he knew he should part with it he couldn't. Grigg sniffed the coat again, closing his eyes, and was about to start scenting when he heard the door jiggle.

He let the coat fall from his shoulders as Duncan stepped foot in the door.

"I brought your car here," he said, "And gave you what little gas I have. I'm gonna go out and get more, but I wanted to be sure you were alright."

Grigg nodded. "I'm alright."

Duncan awkwardly shuffled over and gave him his keys, their fingers brushing.

“The nearest gas station isn’t close, it’ll take me about an hour there and back again.”

Grigg frowned. “Oh.”

Duncan pulled Grigg’s cord out of his pocket. “I got your phone cord,” he said, dropping it onto the couch, “If you wanted to call someone.”

“Thank you.”

“If you’d like, I have frozen pizza I can make for you to have since I’ll be a while.”

Grigg smiled. “That would be nice, but you don’t have to go through all this trouble.”

Duncan took a deep breath, his eyes wide, and backed away. “I…I want to.”

They stared at each other silently for far too long before Grigg spoke again.

“Thank you, I’d love some pizza.”

Duncan practically ran out of the living room, and Grigg fell back against the couch. His heart was beating wildly in his chest, and Duncan’s fresh scent still lingered enough that his slick began to form. He closed his eyes, trying to calm down and think of anything else, but it didn’t seem to be able to stop.

How humiliating.

Grigg got up to plug his phone into the outlet behind the end table, and hoped it got enough juice to be able to text Lee.

He needed help.

His cheeks burned as he tightened his legs together, and was in tears before he stood up to keep from wetting the couch. Grigg ran down the hallway to the bathroom, locked the door, and pulled down his jeans. He wiped the slick from the back of his legs with toilet paper, and stuffed some down the back of his underwear.

It wouldn't do much, but it was all he could do for now.

A slow knock made him freeze.

"Grigg? Are you alright?"

"I'm fine!" he said, his voice shaking, "I just…I'm not feeling all that great."

"Do you need to use my cellular phone to call someone?"

Grigg blinked back tears as he looked in the mirror. "No, I…just give me a second."

"Ok."

He waited for Duncan's steps to echo down the hallway before he pulled up his clothes, and stepped out of the bathroom. It would be way too obvious what was wrong with him, he knew that, and he also knew Duncan was too much of a gentleman to say anything.

Grigg stood near the fridge, but didn't come closer, and Duncan turned immediately.

“I…god this is embarrassing.”

Duncan frowned. “What is it? What’s…” he started to come toward him and froze, his nostrils flaring, “...I…”

“You know I’m attracted to you,” Grigg said, his voice shaking, “Very, very attracted.”

Duncan didn’t say a word, almost frozen in place, and Grigg sighed.

“I know you think there’s something wrong with you, or…I don’t know…that it’s wrong for me to even think you and I…”

“Grigg…”

“I saw you break that man’s arm so quickly,” he continued, unable to stop, “ And…I…I felt protected, not scared. I’ve *never* felt anything but protected when I’m with you.”

Duncan sighed. “I think I need to take you home, it’s not…”

Grigg stepped forward, bolder now, and Duncan stepped back. “I’m practically *dripping* all over myself and you’re just…I know that maybe you don’t think I’m good enough, or strong enough for whatever it is you…”

Duncan rushed forward and gripped his shoulders. “NO! That’s not…that’s not it.”

“Then what? What makes you keep running away from me?”

He sighed. “It’s not safe to be with me, and I shouldn’t…I want to keep you safe.”

Grigg blinked back tears. “Safe from who? The…the person who sent the note?”

Duncan paused. “The note?”

“The one that came to my house with the eyepatch and…”

He sighed.

“That…that was a mistake.”

Grigg stepped away from him. “Wait, what?”

Duncan ran a hand over his head. “I wanted to scare you off, and it seemed like the best way to do it.”

He felt tears run down his cheeks. “Wait, *you* sent that to me? YOU?”

“Grigg…”

Grigg turned around abruptly with a cry, and ran into the living room to find his phone. It was lit up, and he pulled the whole thing out of the plug. He had to get out of here, away from Duncan, and he had to do it now.

“Grigg, wait!”

He turned around fast, angrily pushing Duncan away from him. “No! You…if you want me to stay away from you that badly then MISSION ACCOMPLISHED! You…fuck you!”

Duncan grabbed him as he turned around, and Grigg let out a sob as he wrapped his arms around him.

“Grigg…please let me explain.”

“No,” he whimpered, “No, no, let me go.”

Duncan didn’t move or let him go.

“There are things I’ve done in my past that can come back to haunt me at any given time. The minute I came here to settle down and retire I…I planned on staying away from everything and everyone. *Everyone.* I had everything delivered, I…I…I got everything else online. But then one fucking terrible morning my old ass computer broke and I needed to use one at the library. I was only supposed to be there for a moment, but…then I saw you.”

Grigg shook his head. “Just stop, Duncan. I don’t…”

“I saw you, this young handsome omega smiling at everyone who came into the library and knew right then I should turn tail and run. But I couldn’t leave, I couldn’t…I couldn’t stop coming in because…”

He closed his eyes. “The scent,” he said, “The…pull.”

“Yes.”

Grigg closed his eyes. “True mates,” he whispered, “We…we’re true mates.”

Duncan scented his cheek. “I believe so, yes.”

He let out a sob. “And you still were just…gonna let me spend the rest of my life alone.”

“Grigg…”

“Maybe that’s what I need to do,” he said, his voice shaking, “Maybe…the reason why no one ever wanted me was because I’m not meant to…have anyone.”

Duncan turned him around fast, and Grigg was light headed as he held his face with both hands.

“No, that’s…damn, I don’t…”

Grigg sniffled, and felt his phone ring in his hand. “Someone’s calling me.”

“Grigg, just let me explain myself.”

“You already have,” Grigg said, stepping back, “I…I don’t need the pizza. Thank you, Duncan, for helping me figure out the rest of my life.

He shrugged, forcing a smile even as he kept crying. “Hey, I didn’t need to have kids or…be…happy. I’m just fine how I…how I am.”

“Grigg, please just let me explain.”

Grigg looked at his phone as it vibrated again. “You’ve explained enough.”

He stepped outside, shivering as his car, and called Lee back.

“Fucking hell, Griggy. I’ve been trying to call you back. Are you alright?”

Grigg started to try to speak but a sob came out, followed by another, and he fell forward against the steering wheel. He couldn’t stop crying, his whole body heaving, and before he could even put the key into the ignition his car door opened.

Duncan pulled him out, and Grigg hit him in the chest. “LET ME GO! Just…”

He kissed him then, and Grigg hit him again with much less force. Grigg’s whole body heated up, and his slick was gushing like mad as Duncan pulled back to stare into his eyes.

“What are you doing?” he whispered, his voice shaking, “This is what you wanted. I’m leaving and I…”

Duncan touched his cheek, shaking his head. “I don’t know what I want anymore, but I know I don’t want that. I…I want to tell you everything and maybe when I’m through you can figure out what you want for yourself.”

Grigg’s heart beat wildly in his chest. “I…”

“GRIGG WHAT’S GOING ON? ANSWER ME!”

He turned fast, seeing the phone still on, and lifted it to his ear. “Lee.”

“What’s going on?” Lee said, “You were screaming and…”

Grigg looked at Duncan. “I’m with Duncan.”

Lee paused.

“In a good way?”

“I’m not sure yet.”

“I’ll call the fucking cops on him, Grigg, I swear to Christ. Just give the word.”

Grigg stared at Duncan and shook his head.

“No, not…that. I’ll call you when I know what’s going on. Okay?”

“Promise?”

“I promise.”

He ended the call and stuffed the phone into his pocket. The cord dangled out and he stuffed it into his back pocket.

“You better have a damn good story to tell me.”

Duncan nodded, holding out his hand, and Grigg took it with ease. The way his whole body felt warm at the touch was a bad sign, but he didn’t let go as they headed for the house.

He had no idea what would happen tonight, but something would happen.

Finally.

He just hoped that if he got his heart broken for good, he'd be able to piece it together again.

Chapter 10

“Do you want some more tea?” Duncan asked as they walked inside, not looking at him.

“No, I’m fine.”

“I have plenty of…”

Grigg grabbed his arm and he turned. “I’m fine, Alpha,” he said softly, his voice shaking, “I just…I’d like that story now.”

Duncan nodded, letting out a long breath, and together they went to the couch. Grigg plugged his phone in again and set it on the table beside him while Duncan sat down at the other end of the couch.

“You can sit closer,” Grigg said, frowning.

He sighed, scratching his cheek. “I know, but it’s…hard to concentrate when you’re…your smell is…very nice.”

“Oh.”

Duncan looked at him then. “Can I ask you something?”

“Anything.”

“What was the first thing you noticed about me?”

Grigg frowned. “I…”

He put his hand over his eyepatch. “It was this, right?”

Grigg shook his head. “No, it…it was your scent. I’d never smelled anything so good. Everyone called you my…boyfriend because I kept stocking shelves near you when you came in.”

Duncan smiled. “I see.”

“I mean, the eyepatch is…it’s never bothered me.”

He sighed again, looking down at his hands. “There’s nothing under here,” Duncan mumbled, “I mean, there’s an eyelid and…I don’t have an eye.”

“Oh…kay?”

Duncan squeezed his hands together, his lip curling. “How many books have you read, Grigg?”

Grigg shook his head. “I don’t…I don’t know…maybe a couple thousand? I read a lot as a kid, and I’ve been busy so…”

Duncan looked up through his lashes at him. “I’ve killed more people than that. Plenty more. I can remember every single one of their faces, and their names.”

Grigg blinked, scooting back. “I…”

“I was recruited right out of the military,” Duncan continued, moving closer, “I’m not…I wasn’t killing for fun, don’t think that.”

“You were an assassin?”

“Yes.”

Grigg’s heart beat wildly in his chest. “For how long?”

“Thirty two years.”

“And you left?”

Duncan nodded, looking away again, and Grigg saw tears in his eyes. “I was done. When your whole life is filled with death, it’s not much of a life at all.”

“Duncan…”

“They didn’t want me to go,” he said, his face suddenly filled with anger, “And they…they tried to beat it out of me. They took my eye, and…I…”

Grigg scooted closer to him, the scent of his distress making him whimper. “Alpha…”

He looked at Grigg again, shaking his head. “I burned the place to the ground and came here to just die alone.”

Grigg blinked back tears. “Duncan, I…”

Duncan smiled and reached for his hand, squeezing. “And then I walked into the library looking for a working computer when I had no reason to even need to come there. I have millions of dollars in bank accounts all over the fucking world, and I didn’t want to buy a computer for a couple hundred dollars. Then I saw you, and it was like someone shot me in the chest.”

He moved closer, practically in Duncan’s lap now, and Duncan touched his cheek.

“I knew I needed to stay away, to…keep my distance…but…every time I saw anyone even looking your way, I wanted to take them out behind that place and break their necks.”

Grigg purred. “That…that shouldn’t make me feel so…”

Duncan scoffed. “I’m not done, Grigg.”

He frowned at him. “What?”

Duncan took his other hand and sighed. “I kept going there, knowing I’d get glimpses of you or be able to talk to you or just…smell your scent from across the room. I…I had wet damn dreams about you like a teenager. The whole week after you went into heat I couldn’t stop jerking off and went into rut. I…I knew I had to stop the way I felt about you after that but…”

“Why? Why did you have to stop? You knew I liked you, you had to have smelled it.”

He sighed. “I did.”

“But?”

“It’s been only a few months since I shut down one of the most powerful organizations on the planet, Grigg,” he whispered, touching Grigg’s cheek, “If they find me…they’ll go right for

you first to hurt me. It would…break me if something happened to you. I'd never forgive myself."

Grigg felt tears run down his cheeks. "So, you sent the threat."

Duncan sighed. "After I sent the gifts."

He blinked and pulled out the necklace he'd never taken off. "You sent me this?"

"You liked the comic," he said, his voice thick, "And you always were so happy when you opened them. I…I…"

Grigg let go of his hand and reached out to touch Duncan's face. "We're true mates," he said, "Of course I was happy to get gifts from you, you're my…other half. You…you can't…you can't tell me you'd rather be away from me than be together. I know you're lying."

Duncan leaned in and pressed his forehead to Grigg's, staring into his eyes. "You don't know the danger you'd be putting yourself if we mated."

"We're not meant to be apart," Grigg said, his voice shaking, "Every time you rejected me was like I was dying, and when I tried to even look at other people who I knew wanted me I…it made me sick. Duncan…."

He reached up and pulled off his eyepatch, and Grigg moved back to look at it fully.

There were scars all around the eye, memories of his trauma, and when Grigg reached up to kiss it Duncan sighed.

"Don't push me away," Grigg whispered, "Please don't push me away."

Duncan pulled him into a tight hug, nuzzling his neck, and Grigg purred burying his nose into Duncan's neck in return.

"I don't want to," Duncan whispered, "But what if they decide to come and…"

Grigg pulled back, shaking his head. "What *if*?" he asked, "You don't know that anyone will come, they…I mean…if any of them are left they've got to be terrified *you'll* find *them*. Duncan, I just…please just…"

Duncan took a deep breath, groaning at Grigg's scent, and grabbed his cheeks with both hands.

"Grigg…"

He kissed him so softly Grigg whimpered, clutching him hard, and when he tried to get closer Duncan paused.

"I can smell how much you want this," he said, nuzzling Grigg's cheek, "But I…I want to respect you properly and…not take advantage."

"You're not, you…"

Duncan kissed him again, deeper this time, and Grigg groaned as he pulled away.

"We've done the courting," he said, "But we've never…had a proper date."

Grigg sighed. "Do we have to?"

He laughed, and Grigg's eyes widened.

Another first.

Duncan's laugh.

"It would make me feel better if you...you might not like me as much once you get beyond the scent. I'm not really all that fun to be around, or even…"

Grigg reached out to take his hand. "Okay. Can we go now?"

Duncan squeezed his hand. "How about that pizza?"

His heart skipped a beat. "That sounds great."

"And after…we'll talk about your training," Duncan said, standing up.

He frowned. "Training?"

Duncan shook his head. "Grigg, it would make me feel better if I knew you could take care of yourself. If that means training you, then that's what I'll do. Unless you're not comfortable with that?"

Grigg blushed.

Training in hand to hand with a trained assassin that he was desperately falling for?

"Why would I say no?"

Duncan smiled and touched his cheek softly. “Good to hear,” he said, “I’ll be right back.”

Grigg waited until Duncan left to pick up his phone, warm all over already, and dialed Lee.

“Grigg, I swear to fuck…”

“I’m fine!” He said, “I…I’m fine, I promise.”

Lee sighed. “You had me worried as hell, Griggy. What’s going on?”

“I ran out of gas,” he said, laughing, “And Duncan…he found me. We…we talked, and…I got upset and he got upset and…”

“And?”

“We’re true mates, Lee,” he said, his voice shaking as he watched Duncan in the kitchen, “I know it, and he knows it.”

Lee sighed. “Finally.”

“Yeah, but…his past it’s…there’s a lot, and he…he was worried about my safety.”

“Grigg…”

“He’s going to protect me,” he said, “Don’t.”

“What is this guy? GI Joe? James Bond?”

Grigg laughed. “Kinda.”

“Your dream alpha then.”

His heart skipped a beat as he looked at Duncan again, and found him looking back.

“I…I think he just might be.”

Lee sighed. “Don’t make me throw up, bleh. Just…you’re sure that you’re ok?”

He sighed as Duncan came toward him smiling. The eyepatch was still gone, but it didn’t do anything but make Grigg want him more. Duncan held out his hand and Grigg took it.

“There’s nowhere else I’d rather be.”

Lee laughed. “How slick are you, huh?”

Grigg felt warm all over, but barely any slick. “Not very, I’m just…happy.”

Lee was quiet as Duncan pulled Grigg into his arms.

“Be careful,” he said, “Don’t get a fast heat, and don’t…let him bite your freedom away just yet. You barely know him.”

Grigg looked up into Duncan’s eyes. “I…can’t promise anything.”

“I know, Grigg. I know. Should I tell Will you’re not coming in tomorrow?”

He sighed. “No, I’m not.”

“Goodnight, Griggy.”

“Goodnight.”

Grigg stuffed the phone into his jeans and kissed Duncan hard. He sighed as Duncan pulled him closer, and when they parted for breath the slick started to get worse.

“You said you wanted to date first,” he teased, “But…can you resist that easily?”

Duncan touched his cheek. “I don’t know, but I sure as hell am gonna try.”

Grigg smiled. “Can we start my training now?”

“Grigg…”

He stepped back, smiling, and put up his fists. “I’m stronger than you think.”

Duncan smiled. “I know.”

Chapter 11

Less than an hour later Grigg knew he'd never get sick of Duncan.

They sat across from each other in Duncan's kitchen, opposite ends as per Duncan's instruction, and ate pizza while trying hard not to do more than talk.

"Your sisters sound like they took great care of you."

Grigg smiled. "They were protective, sure, but they've got families now so…"

Duncan frowned. "Do you see them often?"

"Not really, they live in other states. You know? But we talk on the phone sometimes. You don't have any family?"

Duncan took another bite of pizza, and looked off into the distance like he was remembering something. "I grew up in an orphanage," he said, "And when I was eighteen I joined the army and…you know the rest."

"You never tried to look for them? Your family?"

"Why would I? They obviously didn't want me."

Grigg took the last bite of his final piece. "It's not always so simple. Some people have to give kids away for other reasons."

"I suppose."

“And perhaps you have brothers you didn’t even know of before now.”

Duncan’s lip curled. “They could be terrible people.”

“True, but…they could be great.”

He sighed. “I’ll…consider it.”

Grigg smiled. “You don’t have to say that just because I brought it up.”

“No, but…I’ll still consider it.”

“Ok.”

Duncan took a sip of his beer, fingering the bottle as he looked at Grigg. “You seem close to your coworkers.”

He blushed. “Not as close as Adam wanted you to think, we’re not…”

“Oh, I know,” Duncan said, smiling, “I was just…I mean…they’re like brothers to you?”

“Yes, we look out for each other.”

Duncan nodded. “That’s good for you to have that,” he said softly, “Though…if we’re mated that could prove to be a danger for them.”

Grigg blinked. “What do you mean?”

“The people who might come to hurt me may hurt them to get you.”

He felt his chest ache. “You don’t know that.”

Duncan leaned forward. “I know how people like that work, Grigg. I’ve seen it all.”

Grigg frowned. “But…you…you might be wrong. You said you got out and no one’s bothered you since then.”

“They could just be waiting for a weakness.”

“Duncan…”

Duncan looked down at the table. “I wouldn’t want to have your friends get hurt because of me, Grigg, or…”

Grigg got up, unable to stop, and sat down right beside him. He reached for Duncan’s hand and squeezed. “What if we went somewhere?” he asked, his voice shaking, “Just you and me?”

Duncan looked up. “What do you mean?”

He blinked back tears. “We could just go somewhere that no one can find us, and just…be happy.”

Duncan put another hand over their joined hands. “Grigg…”

“I want this,” he said, his voice shaking, “So much. I want this *so* much.”

He brought Grigg’s hand to his mouth and kissed it.

“You’d lose everything.”

“I know.”

“You don’t even know if I’m worth that yet, you barely even…”

“I know, Duncan.”

Duncan sighed. “You’d have nothing, you know that right? Just me. We’d live away from the internet, from television, even from…”

Grigg felt a tear fall down his cheek. “I know, Alpha.”

He squeezed Grigg’s hand again. “We’ll have a few dates first,” he said, “Before thinkin’ of something so crazy. Okay?”

Grigg smiled. “Okay.”

Duncan let out a long breath and smiled. “I don’t know what I got left to do with you now. I have nothing but books and food.”

Grigg laughed. “Well, I am a bit of a bookworm.”

“I suppose you are.”

“But I can think of a few other things we can do,” he said, his voice low.

“Grigg…”

He felt slick spill out of him and wiggled in his seat. “I know you said we should wait…”

“I did.”

“But…we could just…I mean…”

Duncan put a hand on his cheek. “If I get another taste of you, Grigg Harris, I won’t want to stop till I’ve had it all. You understand?”

Grigg sighed. “Duncan…”

He leaned in and kissed Grigg’s forehead softly. “One day at a time, Bookworm,” he said softly, making Grigg whimper, “Alright?”

Grigg closed his eyes. “Ok, Alpha.”

Duncan smiled at him. “You haven’t even flinched at my eye.”

He frowned. “Was I supposed to? You’ve had it uncovered for a while.”

Duncan put his hand over it. “I’m just…used to keeping it covered.”

Grigg moved his hand down. “Don’t.”

He breathed in deeply, closing his eye. “Grigg.”

“Don’t, Alpha,” he said, leaning in to kiss his cheek, “Ok?”

“Okay.”

Grigg nuzzled his cheek, and Duncan sighed. “Grigg…”

“I’m not…I just…can I scent you?”

“Y..yes.”

He nuzzled both sides of Duncan’s face, feeling his slick respond but making no move to do anything about it. Duncan sighed, nuzzling back, and when they kissed it was so soft he could barely feel it.

But it was enough.

“I think…you should probably head home now.”

Grigg sighed. “I don’t want to.”

Duncan pulled him in for a hug, the two of them still sitting in their separate chairs, and nuzzled his neck. “I know, but I think it’s time.”

Grigg got up, his legs a little shaky, and walked into the next room. He grabbed his phone and jacket as Duncan walked him outside.

“I’ll follow you home.”

“You don’t have to.”

He smiled. “I want to.”

Grigg kissed him again, unable to help himself, and rushed off toward his car to keep from begging for more. He shoved the key into the ignition, still shaking, and pulled out of the driveway feeling safe with Duncan at his back.

He put his phone on the holder and called out.

“Call Lee.”

Lee answered on the first ring.

“Well?”

“We had a date,” he said, his voice shaking.

“That’s all?”

“He wants to go slow.”

“Well then, that’s…”

“He’s also worried that…something could happen to me and…possibly other people. So he wants to train me.”

“Train?”

“Yeah,” he said, blinking back tears, “But…I told him if worrying about my friends and family is what might make him not want to be with me, I’d…I’d go with him anywhere.”

Lee was quiet.

“Grigg, you barely know him.”

Grigg smiled, wiping tears from his eyes. “He’s my alpha, Lee. I don’t need to know anything else.”

“You’d just…run away with him?”

Grigg looked behind him, seeing Duncan’s truck in the distance, and nodded. “Yeah, I think I would.”

Lee let out a long breath. “What if I told you not to? I’ve known you longer. Grigg…”

“I have to go.”

He ended the call, driving on, and thought of nothing but Duncan's kiss the whole ride home. When he pulled into his driveway Duncan didn't get out, but he looked back to smile at him once more going inside.

Grigg climbed into bed with a sigh, and touched the necklace around his neck.

He'd found his alpha.

That's all that mattered now.

Nothing else.

Chapter 12

Grigg called Duncan the very next morning, and was delighted when he answered.

“Good morning.”

“Good morning,” Duncan said, “I thought you’d be at work.”

“I told Lee to tell Will I was staying home, remember?” he said, grabbing his bagel and sitting at the table, “I expected to be with you all last night and today doing…other things.”

Duncan sighed. “Grigg…”

“We can do my training today, if you’re not busy.”

“I’m never busy.”

“Can I come over?”

Duncan sighed again. “I think…we need to…put a day between us.”

Grigg frowned. “What?”

“I just…”

“You said you were worried about me.”

“I know, Grigg, but…if we want to go slow with this too much time together will result in things like spontaneous heats and ruts. We won’t be able to stop ourselves.”

He sighed. “Fine.”

“Grigg…”

“I’m gonna go to work then,” he mumbled, “No use sitting around here all alone. Goodbye Alpha.”

Grigg ended the call, annoyed, and dialed Will who answered on the first ring. “Grigg? I thought you’d be busy today, according to Lee’s gossip.”

He sighed. “No, my D…boyfriend…wants to go slow.”

“He seems like the old fashioned type.”

“He is, but there’s other…it’s complicated.”

Will laughed. “It always is, isn’t it?”

“Do you need me to come in?”

“Not unless you want to,” Will said, “Right now it’s pretty tense here though. Adam’s still tense from whatever happened during his heat, and Elias keeps rushing to the bathroom so much I feel like I’m paying him to jerk off.”

Grigg laughed. “I’ll be there in a half hour.”

“You’re sure?”

“Yeah.”

“See you then.”

Grigg ended the call and hopped in the shower fast, trying not to think too hard about Duncan but unable to stop himself. He closed his eyes, sighing as he remembered last night instead of being rejected today. The memory of their kiss made him whimper, and he started to jerk off to thoughts of being pushed down onto Duncan’s old looking couch before Duncan knotted him properly. He came with a groan, spilling into his hand, and washed off fast before running to get dressed.

The drive to work didn’t take long, and when he came inside he could feel the tension in the air.

Second Adam frowned at him when he walked inside. “What are you doing here on your day off? Lee said you and your boyfriend were going to be shagging all day.”

Grigg blushed, and came around the front desk. “Nope.”

“So you just came in anyway?”

“Yep.”

“Weird, isn’t it? You could’ve just…”

“I’m here, ok?” he mumbled, “That’s better than being short handed, right?”

“I suppose. Though by the look of you you’re just as cranky as Mr. Raki over there.”

Grigg looked over to the computer area, and saw Adam slumped at his desk frowning at the crowd. “He’s still upset?”

“Yes, and it’s getting old. I mean, he had a perfectly decent alpha treating him well during his heat. I’m not sure what happened, but he’s not talking and I got my head practically ripped off when I asked.”

Grigg frowned. “Oh.”

“And Nigel hasn’t come in either, not once. I think that’s pissing him off more.”

Grigg sighed. “I…I saw him.”

Second Adam blinked at him. “You saw who?”

“Nigel,” Grigg mumbled, “I saw Nigel at the fountain. He seemed pretty upset too.”

They both looked at Adam. “What do you think happened?”

“I don’t know.”

Second Adam sighed. “This is why I don’t get involved with alphas,” he said, stretching out his arms as he headed back to his station, “All they are is a waste of… *oh* .”

Grigg turned and saw Elias standing against the wall by the door wiggling. He looked uncomfortable, and as Grigg stared he also saw something else.

“Wow.”

“He might be an ugly ass, but if he’s got a rocket in his pants…I’m jumping straight on for a ride.”

Grigg giggled. “Adam…”

“I’m serious, Griggy,” he said, not looking away, “Can you imagine how big it gets? It’s got to be at least…”

A cleared throat made them both turn to see Will standing in the doorway of his office.

Second Adam started to press buttons on the computer. “Oh Will! Didn’t see you there! We’re very busy, you know? Very, very busy.”

Grigg grabbed a cart and began emptying out the returns. “Extremely busy, boss.”

“Yeah, sure. Just…next time you’re *busy* ? Try to keep the sex talk a little quieter.”

Second Adam scoffed. “Sex talk? Here? At my place of work? I would *never* !”

Both Grigg and Will laughed loudly, disrupting the library quiet, and Adam winked as Will shook his head. “Just…knock it off, ok?”

“Ok, boss.”

“And Adam?”

“Yes?”

“Leave Elias alone.”

“But…”

Will walked up and poked him in the chest. “Leave. Elias. Alone.”

He frowned. “Fine.”

Will turned away like he thought it was handled, and Second Adam looked over at Elias again. “I thought you’d already tried it with him,” Grigg said, “After the other day when I told you, you…”

“I *tried* , Grigg,” Adam sighed, “I kept using my best on him and he just seemed completely oblivious, which might be even sadder really.”

“I mean, it’s not really sad, just…”

“It’s *sad* , Grigg. Can you imagine having *that* and no one around to appreciate it? The poor thing is…”

As they both watched Elias run into the bathroom. “Adam…”

“I think I need to use the toilet,” he said, “I’ll be back soon.”

“Adam, just…”

Adam took off running so fast Will would’ve missed it if he’d turned. Grigg saw him slip inside the men’s room, and knew it could go both ways. Either he was about to rock Elias’s world or he’d be completely rejected.

Part of Grigg hoped for the latter. It would be a humbling experience for Adam to be rejected by someone he thought so beneath him. He waited, wondering if either of them would come out, but then several people came up to the desk so soon he got lost in actual work.

Second Adam didn't return for almost ten minutes, and when he did he looked more annoyed than anything else.

"So?"

"I know why no one wants to take a ride on that rocket," he mumbled, pulling out some busy work, "The pilot is an asshole."

Grigg burst out laughing, and then covered his mouth just as Elias came out of the men's room. He glared over at them both, and before Grigg could truly appreciate the joke he realized Lee wasn't coming over to see him.

"Is there something wrong with Lee?"

"What? I don't think so?"

He looked over, and saw Lee sitting at his desk writing stuff down.

Maybe he was busy.

"Are you going to have lunch first or shall I?"

"You go," Grigg said, "I'm gonna check on something."

“Ok.”

He pulled out his phone and texted Lee.

Grigg: You’re missing all the fun over here. Adam took his shot with Elias and got rejected.

Lee picked up his phone while Grigg watched, and then set it down again.

He frowned.

Grigg: Are you mad at me about last night? Lee, seriously?

Lee looked at his phone again, and then looked up at Grigg once before setting it down once more.

Grigg: Fine.

He went back to work, checking in and out the few people who came up not using the self checkouts. Second Adam came back after a half hour so he took lunch, which happened to be at the exact same time Adam did.

Grigg found one of his frozen meals in the freezer and put it in the microwave.

“Hey.”

Adam frowned, poking at his food. “Hello.”

“Are you ok?”

“I'm just fine.”

“Adam…”

“I’m fine, Grigg,” Adam said, “Just fine.”

Grigg watched him poke at his food some more, and sat down with his spaghetti. “How did the heat go?”

“Fine.”

He sighed. “Just fine?”

“Yes,” Adam said, his voice shaking, “How else is it supposed to go? Wonderfully? It’s… painful, and it’s…”

He watched tears fill Adam’s eyes.

“Adam?”

Adam’s lip quivered. “Do you think I’m going to be alone forever?”

Grigg blinked. “What?”

“Alphas don’t want me,” he said, as a tear fell down his face, “And I’m not attracted to anyone who does, and…I…”

Grigg put an arm around him and he leaned into the hug.

"Hey, hey…"

Adam whimpered. "I really thought he'd want me," he said, "I…I don't know what I did wrong."

Grigg sighed. "Maybe it's not that he didn't want you," he whispered, "Maybe he wanted you so much he…doesn't want that to be the first time he gets to have you."

Adam sniffled. "But…"

He pulled back, and smiled at Adam. "Give him a chance to explain, maybe? I've seen him look at you, Adam. He definitely wants you."

He sniffled some more, and picked up his fork. "You really think he does?"

"Oh yeah," he said, taking a bite of his food, "I really do."

Grigg watched Adam's face light up and sighed.

If he ran away with Duncan this is what he'd miss.

Just being there for his friends.

He blinked back tears as he took another bite of his spaghetti, and tried not to think about the bad things that may come. There was nothing set in stone, not yet, and for all he knew Duncan's past life was behind him.

They ate lunch after that silence, and both walked out together at the same time. It was pure luck that the minute they did Nigel came through the library door.

Adam froze.

“Adam?”

He went up to Nigel, ignoring Grigg, and Grigg watched as Nigel’s dour expression brightened before his eyes. They touched, frequently, and Adam walked Nigel over to the computers where he sat down not looking away.

Grigg smiled and walked over to the desk where Second Adam seemed just as interested as he was.

“Would you look at that? I suppose they fixed whatever was bothering them?”

He smiled and pulled out his phone.

Grigg: I want to see you tomorrow night. I won’t take no for an answer.

Duncan: Yes, sir.

Grigg: =)

“Yeah,” he said, putting his phone away, “I guess they did.”

Chapter 13

“I can’t believe this is what I’m doing on a Friday night.”

Duncan put his arm around Grigg’s midsection, and the feel of his breath made Grigg shiver.

“Do you want to stop?”

“No.”

“Then stop complaining. I’m going to reach for you, and you’re going to throw me off. Are you ready?”

Grigg felt him warm at his back, and the closeness only made his slick drip out more easily.

“I…yeah.”

“One, two…”

Grigg pushed back, making Duncan groan, and tried to get under his arm but was pulled easily down until they tumbled to the floor. He panted, laughing, and Duncan sighed.

“This is the fourth time we’ve tried this, Grigg.”

“I’m trying!” he said, laughing, “I just…I get nervous.”

He’d spent most of the day in anticipation of his night with Duncan, and the build up probably made it much harder to concentrate. Grigg had hoped they’d do more tonight than just train, but being together felt so good he wasn’t going to complain.

“We need to try something else.”

“No, no, I can—”

Duncan rolled, grabbing him around the upper chest, and whispering in his ear.

“Get out of my arms, Omega,” he growled, “If you can.”

“I…” he panted, “I can’t.”

“Yes, you can. I showed you what to do.”

They’d been at this for almost two hours already, and basic self defense was something Grigg had gone to classes for once but never again but this was different.

It was Duncan.

Grigg pushed back, hitting his throat, and Duncan let him go as he rolled them over until he was on top. He stared down at him, trying to catch his breath, and felt Duncan's cock hard against his backside.

"I win."

Duncan coughed, touching his throat. "You win. That…I didn't teach you that."

"I saw it in Alpha Racer," he said, "James Kagley is an alpha race car driver who…"

Duncan grabbed his hands. "A television program? You remembered that from a television program but two hours with me and you still can't get holds?"

He blushed. "I…"

"Good boy," he said, making Grigg's slick worse, "Always keep them on their toes."

"Yes, sir," he said, watching Duncan's pupils dilate.

"Grigg…"

Grigg leaned in close, their breath mingling, "Yes, Sir?"

"This isn't meant for…"

"For what, Sir?"

Duncan pulled him down into a kiss and he groaned, clutching his neck as they rolled again. The weight of Duncan on top of him made his whole body heat up, and he wanted more but instead just took what was offered. Duncan's hands came up the back of his shirt and he whimpered, shaking, just as he pulled back.

"You're a menace."

Grigg smiled. "Sorry, Mr. Vizla. I'll be a good omega, I promise."

Duncan touched his cheek. "You are good," he said, "Too good for me, I think."

"No," he whispered, kissing Duncan's palm, "Never."

"Grigg…"

"We don't have to bond," he said, "Not tonight, but…"

Duncan growled. "Grigg, we…"

He bucked up, and Duncan gasped as he took his hand putting it over his waistband.

"Just…touch me. That's all."

"Grigg, I'm not sure if I start I'll be able to stop."

Grigg smiled. “That’s the nicest thing anyone’s ever said to me.”

Duncan kissed him then, shoving his hand down the front of Grigg’s sweatpants, and the first touch to his cock made him cry out. He stroked, his rough hands making Grigg whimper, and when Grigg tried to reach for him he pushed him back.

“D…”

“Shhh…”

He stroked fast, kissing again more deeply than Grigg had ever been kissed. Grigg was gushing slick by the time Duncan pulled his hand back, nipping his ear.

“I can smell you.”

“Alpha…”

“You smell so damn good.”

“Duncan, please.”

Duncan flipped him onto his belly, and Grigg gasped as he suddenly started licking into his wet willing hole. Every flick of his tongue made Grigg let out a mangled whimper, gripping the floor so tight he was sure his nails would break.

“Alpha, oh god…Duncan…”

He came with a shout, spilling all over himself, but Duncan didn’t stop his growling noises making Grigg grip back, pulling him off to get the upper hand. Duncan’s mouth was glistening with his slick and he kissed him, shuddering at the taste, and when he touched his knot he felt Duncan shiver.

“Grigg…”

“I want to feel you,” he whispered, “I want…just…”

Duncan came faster than he expected, his head falling back as he fell over the edge, and when Duncan kissed him again he was gone. He rolled him over, pinning Grigg down, and his growls were everything.

“I win again,” Grigg teased as he pulled back, staring down at him.

He smiled.

“You remembered my move.”

“Yes, Sir.”

Grigg lifted his palm up and licked it, watching Duncan’s face. “You really are a menace.”

Grigg grinned, and pulled him down for another kiss.

“Your menace.”

“Yes, you’re mine.”

The words made Grigg tear up, and he couldn’t stop himself. Duncan frowned. “Grigg?”

“Sorry,” he whispered, “I just…I’ve never been anyone’s before.”

Duncan touched his cheek. “You were just waiting to be mine.”

He felt a tear fall down his cheek. “Maybe I was.”

Duncan kissed his cheeks one by one, and pulled him down in an embrace that felt like home.

“I’m proud of us,” he said, rubbing Grigg’s back, “I thought we’d both be in the midst of spontaneous bonding by now.”

Grigg closed his eyes. “And if we were?”

“We’d figure it out.”

He smiled. “I’m ready to start class again in about…fifteen minutes.”

Duncan sighed. “How about we just have dinner, and you can show me that Racer show?”

Grigg smiled. “Sounds good to me, Alpha. I’ll put in a pizza.”

He got up slowly, leaving Duncan on the floor and found a pepperoni pizza in his freezer he quickly put in the oven. Grigg sat there, stunned, that everything was moving so fast and so well.

It was like a dream.

Why did it feel like soon he might wake up?

He felt Duncan’s arms come around him and he sighed, leaning back in his arms.

“You smell distressed.”

“No, I…”

“Grigg.”

“I was just wondering when the bad things are gonna happen.”

Duncan kissed his cheek. “Maybe they won’t.”

“Hmm.”

He reached up to touch Grigg’s necklace. “Maybe like your Omega Man, the day has already been saved.”

Grigg smiled. “I hope so.”

Pizza didn’t take long, and they ate together on the couch watching Alpha Racer. Duncan pointed out every inconsistency, but Grigg didn’t mind.

Tonight had been exactly what he’d always dreamed a night with his alpha would be.

He already knew what he wanted.

Duncan was the one who had to figure things out.

He fell asleep in Duncan’s lap, burying his face against his alpha’s stomach as Duncan ran fingers through his hair.

Grigg only hoped Duncan was here in the morning, but even if he wasn’t tonight had been perfect.

Just perfect.

Chapter 14

Grigg woke to the scent of bacon, groaning as he rolled over to touch the cold pillow beside him. He inhaled again, smiling as he sat up, and put on his boxers before heading out toward the kitchen.

Duncan was wearing jeans and nothing else as he stood at the oven obviously lost in cooking their breakfast. Grigg came toward him and he smiled.

“Good morning.”

“Good morning.”

Grigg came up behind him and hugged Duncan from behind, putting his head on Duncan’s shoulder. “I had bacon in the house?”

“Yes, and eggs.”

“Hmm,” he sighed, “It’s been such a weird week I must’ve forgotten.”

Duncan turned his head and Grigg kissed him softly. “I hope next week is much better.”

Grigg smiled. “It’s starting that way already.”

“Your phone was ringing earlier,” Duncan said, turning back to their food, “You must’ve left it last night before we went upstairs. It’s on the couch.”

Grigg moved away from him and went into the living room where the scarce amount of furniture made it easy to get right to the couch. He picked it up and saw several missed calls and messages from Will and Adam. He frowned, heart beating faster, and listened to the last one from Adam just an hour ago.

“Grigg, Lee is in the hospital. He collapsed outside a store last night and…”

Grigg didn’t finish the message, and turned to rush into the kitchen just as Duncan met him halfway there. “Grigg, what is it?”

“Lee, he’s…hospital. I need to get to the hospital.”

Duncan nodded. “Yes, I’ll get dressed.”

“No, no, I can go.”

Duncan pulled him into his arms, and kissed his cheek softly. “Even if you don’t wish for me to go inside, I…I want to be there for you. I know he’s very important to you.”

Grigg’s eyes filled with tears. “Alpha, I…”

Duncan lifted his chin up and kissed Grigg's forehead. "It's going to be ok, Grigg. Take some deep breaths."

Grigg took several deep breaths, whimpering, and together they went upstairs to dress.

His first morning after with Duncan was over, and his worries about Lee rushed to the surface. It had only been a year since Lee was put into remission, and the thought of him dying before Grigg could mend their friendship was devastating.

Grigg barely registered them leaving the house, though he did call Adam who told him which hospital Lee was staying at, and as they drove he leaned on Duncan for the comfort of his scent but said nothing. Everything felt raw, too much, and when they parked he got out of the car shaking so badly Duncan practically had to carry him the whole way there.

Lee was on the eleventh floor, room 1121, and when Grigg asked to be able to visit the desk clerk frowned. "There's only one pass to go up, he's got three people there already."

Grigg looked at Duncan, who took the pass and put it in his hand. "I'll be down here, alright? Just waiting."

"But…"

He kissed him softly. "Go see your friend."

Grigg nodded, tears in his eyes, and walked to the elevator shaking. He got inside, hating all the strangers close, and told himself everything was going to be ok.

Lee was a fighter, he was the strongest person Grigg knew, and he'd be ok.

He had to be ok.

Grigg got out on the eleventh floor, and practically ran down the hall rushing into Lee's room where he found Adam, Second Adam, and Will around Lee's bed. They all turned to him, frowning, and Lee was sound asleep covered in different things going in and out of him.

"Is he…?"

Second Adam got up, and hugged Grigg hard.

"He hasn't woken up yet," he said, his voice thick, "The lazy thing just wants his beauty sleep I think."

Grigg laughed. "Adam…"

Adam sniffled, wiping his eyes. "The doctors said they called you but you didn't answer so they called Will."

Grigg's chest hurt. "I was…with Duncan."

He nodded, patting Grigg's cheek as he smiled. "Did you at least get lucky? Lee would want that for you, you know."

"A little."

"Good, very good. Come sit with us."

He moved a chair for Grigg, who could hardly see through his tears. "What did the doctors say?"

"The cancer is back," Will said, "And it's spread to his uterus and…they have to remove everything."

Grigg frowned. "What? Lee said…"

"Lee said he doesn't get any heats," Adam said, touching Lee's hand on the bed, "He never said he didn't have a uterus, he said the chemotherapy ruined his heats and scent glands. They said if they do this he won't have kids."

"He doesn't want kids, so that's…that's fine. He'll be fine."

They all frowned at him. "Grigg, he might not be fine. We don't know for sure."

Grigg shook his head, grabbing Lee's upper arm. "He's strong, stronger than all of us, he'll… he'll be fine."

They all sat there for what felt like hours, not saying much, and Grigg checked his phone realizing just how long it had been. "I…I have to tell Duncan to go," he said, "Can any of you take me home?"

"I can," Second Adam said, "I could use the company."

He smiled. "Ok, give me a minute."

Grigg went downstairs, wiping his face, and got out to find Duncan reading what looked like a Omega magazine. He walked up with a smile. "Hey."

Duncan shot up fast, pulling him into a hug. "How is he?"

"He hasn't…he's not waking up," he said, his voice shaking, "But I want to stay till they kick us out just in case he does. I…he and I were fighting and I just…"

"I understand."

"Adam said he's gonna give me a ride home, ok? You don't have to stay."

Duncan stepped back a little, and shook his head. "Do you want me to go?"

"What? No, I just…"

"I'm going to stay," he said, "Though have any of you eaten? I can leave to get food."

Grigg shook his head. “No, I don’t think so.”

Duncan nodded, hugging him again. “I’ll go get something fast from across the road,” he said, “I’ll call you when I return.”

“Duncan, you’re…you don’t have to do this.”

He smiled at him, and Lee wished he didn’t have the eyepatch on so he could see his whole face.

“Yes, I do.”

Lee watched him walk out, turning toward the elevator, and found Second Adam inside when the doors opened. He had tears on his face, and Grigg ran up to hug him hard. “Adam?”

“I can’t do this, Griggy,” he said, his voice shaking, “You all have become my family, and I… fucking Christ, what if he dies?”

The doors closed, and Grigg closed his eyes. “He’s not going to die.”

“You don’t bloody know that,” Adam said, sniffling again, “He’s had this before, and he’s already not eating enough protein with that vegetarian diet of his! He’s…”

Grigg gently pushed him back and smiled. “Would you feel better if he wasn’t a vegetarian?”

Adam wiped his eyes. “Maybe! I…I don’t know. I just…this isn’t how I usually am, you know? I’m the emotionless fuck machine, I don’t cry.”

“You’re not emotionless.”

“Yes I am, you shut your mouth.”

Grigg hugged him again. “I’m gonna tell Lee you cried about him, he’s gonna laugh so much about it when he wakes up.”

Adam hugged him harder. “He bloody well better.”

They were both still hugging when the doors opened, and they stepped apart heading back for the room where Will and Adam were still as stoic as ever. “Any change?”

“Nope. Did you talk to Duncan?”

“Yes, he doesn’t want to leave and he’s gonna get us all food.”

Second Adam sat down next to him. “He’s a keeper, that one, even if he’s some sort of super spy hero.”

“Spy hero? Who told you that?”

“Lee,” Second Adam said, sighing, “You don’t bloody tell me anything.”

Grigg took Lee's hand on the bed and squeezed.

"I do tell him everything, don't I?"

"Yeah, you do."

They all stared at Lee, hoping for a change, and when the Doctor came in they all turned.

"I see he's got even more friends here now," he said, smiling, "Hello Grigg."

Doctor Horst, or as Lee called him once "Doctor Hot", was Lee's oncologist since he'd gone into remission just last year. He was a bit of a jerk in the start but Lee and he got along fairly well, and Grigg had only met him the one time.

"Hello, Doctor. I…is he…"

"We have to wait for him to regain consciousness to do anything other than the scan he received coming in tonight, but I believe if he has all of his reproductive organs removed he'll go into full remission. It's returned and spread, yes, but…he's very strong and he can fight this."

They all looked at Lee.

"If he has it all removed," Adam said, making them all look at him, "It will affect…his…Lee is very sexually active."

"Adam!" Grigg said, "We shouldn't be talking about this when Lee isn't able to be a part of the conversation. We're not the ones who make these decisions."

Horst looked down at the papers in his hand, and then up at Grigg. "No, *he* isn't. But *you* are, Grigg. Lee made you his medical power of attorney."

Grigg blinked. "He did?"

"Yes, it's here. You didn't know?"

He looked at Lee. "No."

"Well," Horst said, patting his back, "If he doesn't wake in forty eight hours you'll have to decide what happens."

"I already know," Grigg said, tears in his eyes, "I'd tell you to do the operation. I know that's what he'd want."

"Yes, I suppose he would."

Horst took Lee's vitals, saying nothing, and then left them all again. Grigg leaned against Adam, who took his hand. "I wish Nigel was here."

"You could call him?"

“He’s at work.”

“You can still call him, Adam, he’s your alpha, it's his *job* to be here, “Second Adam mumbled, “That’s the reason we have alphas, isn’t it? Grigg’s alpha is getting us hamburgers and Nigel could wait with him.”

Adam frowned. “Can I call him?”

“You can,” Grigg said, “Or I can if you want?”

He stood up, shaking his head. “No, I…I’ll call. Excuse me.”

Adam left them alone again, and Will sighed. “You all know I’m an alpha too? You don’t need to bring all of them here, I’m perfectly capable of comforting you.”

Second Adam scoffed. “You, love? You’re adorable,, yes, but you’re not *theirs*. It’s…it’s different.”

Will frowned, shaking his head. “Fine, just…if you want one of them to come up I can go downstairs or…”

“No, Will, it’s not that. Ok?” Grigg sighed, “It’s just different, but you’re still part of our family. You’re family.”

Will sighed. “That’s good too I guess, I…I need to get some air, excuse me.”

Grigg and Second Adam were left alone, staring at Lee who was still not moving.

“He’s gonna have a hell of a time with it after he gets this operation,” Second Adam said, “He won’t slick without all that, you know?”

“I know.”

“Most alphas adore slick.”

“Adam, just drop it ok?”

“Alright, I just meant….”

“STOP IT!” Grigg said, standing, “Lee will be fine! He’s GOT to be fine, ok? He….he…”

Adam hugged Grigg hard, making shushing noises. “Oh love, I’m an ass. I’m sorry, I just…I hate all this.”

“I know, I know, I just…I can’t…”

The heart monitor made strange noises and they both looked at the machine frowning. “What does that mean?”

“I don’t…”

Lee grabbed Grigg's hand and he screamed out.

"Lee? LEE!"

Lee shook his head. "The two of you can't shut up and let me sleep? You had to yell?"

Second Adam leaned over and kissed Lee's cheek. "Oh you bloody perfect thing, you look like shit but I love those pretty blue eyes."

Lee frowned at Grigg. "Is he drunk?"

Grigg laughed. "No, he's just happy you're awake. He…HE'S AWAKE!" he yelled.

Will and Adam came running in, and they both were smiling.

"The gang's all here," Lee mumbled, "All I did was pass out. I might've bumped my head but…"

They all looked at each other. "Lee, it's…it's not just that."

Lee froze. "It's back?"

"Yes, but…"

He laughed as tears filled his eyes. "I knew it couldn't last. Hey, at least I got a good year of amazing sex, huh?"

Grigg grabbed his hand again and squeezed. "Dr. Horst says it's just in your uterus," he said, his voice shaking, "And they…they can take it out and you'll probably be completely in remission again."

Lee paled. "Just the uterus?"

"Everything," Adam said, "All your reproductive organs he'd have to remove."

They all watched Lee's face fall. "Oh."

"But you'd be alive and you'd be just fine."

Lee nodded. "Yeah, I'd be fine. That's….that's good. It'll be good."

"So you want me to tell them yes? That's what you want?"

Lee looked away and tears filled his eyes.

"Hey," Will said, "Let's all let Grigg and Lee talk a bit yeah? We can see if Duncan has those burgers."

"But…"

He all but dragged the two Adams out of the room and Grigg sat down next to Lee. "Lee?"

“I always said I didn’t want kids,” he said, “But I could’ve still had them if I had an egg implanted I just couldn’t make my own and now it…it’s over. I’ll be a dried up spinster omega who no one wants to have sex with that lives alone in his apartment with bottles of wine to drink all alone.”

“But you’ll be *alive*, Lee. You’ll be alive,” Grigg said, sniffling as he took his hand.

Lee looked at him. “And you’ll be gone off having kids with your spy leaving me.”

“Lee…”

“I don’t care if there’s ten thousand assassins coming to kill us all, Griggy. I need you here, I…you’re my best friend. I need you here with me for all of this. I need to help you watch your stupid brats and I need…I need my friend here. Okay?”

Grigg kissed his hand, nodding. “Okay.”

“Now go tell Horst I want to see him so we can get this shit started.”

Grigg smiled. “You could just press the button.”

Lee sighed. “Press it for me, ok? I’m fucking weak and I can’t.”

He pressed the button, laying his head on Lee’s bed, and Lee pulled him in for a hug. “Did you fuck him yet?”

Grigg laughed. “No, but we did other stuff.”

“Ohhh…tell me everything.”

He smiled.

Lee was gonna be ok.

That’s all that mattered for now.

Chapter 15

Everyone left about twenty minutes before visiting hours ended, but Grigg stayed because he couldn't imagine leaving Lee alone. He called Duncan up to come up to visit, despite worries it might not go well.

"You know," Lee said, sighing as he laid back, "It doesn't hurt. I always think it's gonna hurt when it comes back again, but it just…it doesn't."

Grigg blinked back tears. "Lee, I'm so sorry."

"You didn't do this to me, Griggy," he said, his eyes a little heavy, "Don't apologize for it."

"I know, but—"

A knock at the door meant Ducnan was there.

"Come in!" Lee said loudly, grabbing Grigg's hand.

"Lee, he…"

"I'll be nice, don't worry."

Duncan came in with a bouquet of flowers, a little wilted probably from the end of business hours in the gift shop, and he looked completely out of place. "Hello."

"Hey," Lee said, as he put the flowers in an empty vase, "You know, I hate daisies."

Duncan's face fell. "Oh, I can bring you another tomorrow? I wasn't…"

"I'm joking," he laughed, looking at Grigg, "He's adorable."

"Lee, you said you'd be nice."

"This *is* me being nice."

Duncan sat in one of the chairs by Lee's bed. "How are you feeling?"

"Like I got hit by a truck," Lee said, "But I should be used to this by now."

"Did they find out what's happened?"

"The cancer came back," Lee said, "Like I thought it would. Though the Doc says he can get rid of it for good this time. He, of course, said that *last time* so…"

Duncan frowned. "I'm sorry."

"Thank you."

The awkward silence that lingered in the air made Grigg wary, but he didn't move away from Lee.

"We gotta talk about you stealing my best friend, old man," Lee said, yawning, "I'm not gonna let that happen, you know?"

Duncan smiled. "I don't want that to happen."

“He said there’s assassins, or pirates or something I don’t…it doesn’t matter. I’ll fight alongside you both if that’s what it takes to keep my Grigg here. I want to meet all his babies and be there for the morning after your mating. Okay?”

Duncan looked at Grigg. “I want that for him too. He deserves to have all of his family with him.”

“I’m not…”

“You’re his family,” he said, “He has his sisters, I know, but you’re here. I don’t want to take anything away from him, I just…want all that happiness in the world for him.”

“Alpha,” Grigg said, wiping the tears from his face, “Lee is just…”

“Sleeping,” Duncan said, making Grigg turn to look at Lee who was doing exactly that, “He’s been through a lot today.”

“Yeah.”

“I’m sorry,” Duncan whispered, “I know this is not how you wanted today to turn out, or how any of you expected this to go for your friend.”

Grigg let go of Lee’s hand and walked over to Duncan, wrapping his arms around him and kissing him deeply. “The more I’m with you, the more…I can’t imagine being without you.”

Duncan smiled. “I feel the same way.”

“Duncan—”

A knock made them both turn, and the nurse popped her head inside. “Visiting hours are almost over, but if one of you wishes to stay for his surgery in the morning, I can get a cot?”

“I do,” Grigg said, “I…I want to stay.”

“Alright. Just finish up, ok?”

He nodded.

Duncan hugged him tightly. “Do you want me to come back tomorrow? I can bring donuts or coffee? I don’t have anything planned.”

Grigg smiled. “How are you so amazing?”

“Only to you.”

He kissed him again. “I’d love for you to come back, but if you can’t that’s fine. I just can’t let him go through this alone.”

“I know.”

Grigg hugged him again. “I wish you didn’t have to go.”

“I’ll be here in the morning.”

He kissed Grigg again softly. “Goodnight.”

“Goodnight.”

The minute he left Grigg sighed, sitting down in a chair by Lee’s bed, and put a hand on his chest.

“You love him, huh?”

Grigg looked at Lee, who obviously wasn’t sleeping at all. “You were faking?”

“I figured you need some time. Do you?”

“Do I what?” Grigg asked, looking down at his hands.

“Grigg…”

“I barely know him, Lee,” he said, his voice shaking.

“He’s your true mate, you said, it really doesn’t matter at all if he’s a complete stranger. If you know, you know.”

Grigg blinked back tears and looked at him. “I think I do love him,” he said, “Which is about the worst thing to be thinking of right now with what you’re going through.”

“Why? Because you’re happy? Grigg, even if I *don’t* come out of this the last thing I’d want for any of you is to be alone and sad. Sink your teeth into that old man’s neck and claim him for me, yeah? Even if there’s a million pirates after you.”

Grigg laughed. “There’s no pirates.”

Lee smiled, reaching his hand out as someone knocked again. “Killers, pirates, whatever. Hold my hand.”

“Come in,” Grigg said, moving again to take his hand as the nurse brought in the cot.

“Thank you.”

“You’re welcome.”

“You’re staying?” Lee asked, “You can always come back in the morning.”

“I’m staying,” he said, putting the blanket over the cot as he pushed it out, “Someone’s gotta be here to listen to you bitch.”

Lee scoffed. “You’re so mean to me.”

Grigg smiled and laid down staring at him.

“I love you, you know?”

“I know,” Lee said, sighing, “I love you too, despite you wanting to run away with old eye patch.”

Grigg kicked off his jeans and sighed.

“You’ll have one too, you know. An alpha. Then I can throw this all in your face.”

Lee closed his eyes. “Never. I’m too pretty to be forced to stick to one boring dick all the time.”

Grigg smiled.

“We’ll see.”

The light went out as Lee hit the edge of it, and they both sat in the darkness.

“Grigg?”

“Yeah?”

“If I *do* die…”

“Lee, don’t. You’re not gonna die.”

“IF I do,” Lee continued, ignoring him, “Promise you’ll name your first kid after me?”

Grigg felt tears start to run down his cheeks. “I promise, but you’re not gonna die. Okay?”

Lee was quiet.

“Lee?”

“And promise that you’ll look after that kid, his name is Aksel, he comes into storytimes a lot. His dad is an asshole but he’s a good kid, and I give him candy. He…he likes kit kats.”

“I will, Lee. I promise.”

“I don’t want to die, Grigg.”

“I know.”

“Also promise me you’ll help Second Adam see that he’s not a heartless twat? And Will to see that he’s mad for Dr. Lecter? And Adam…”

Grigg sniffled. “Lee, you’re gonna be here to do all of that. Okay? I promise.”

“Promise me.”

Grigg wiped at his eyes in the dark and sniffled. “I…I promise.”

“Goodnight, Griggy.”

“G…oodnight.”

They were quiet again, and Grigg tried to sleep but worries that he’d wake up to Lee being gone made that harder than ever. He listened to Lee’s breath, counting the time between each, and when it felt like he couldn’t keep his eyes open he heard Lee sigh.

“Grigg, come sleep with me?”

Grigg didn't have to be asked twice. He got up, climbed in bed beside him, and hugged Lee tight from behind. He closed his eyes, and put his hand over Lee's heart.

"Everything is gonna be ok."

Lee sighed.

"I hope so."

They both fell asleep not long after and were woken up by a familiar voice.

"Well, that's one way to do it."

Grigg woke first, and it was still barely light outside. "Is it time? Lee, wake up."

Lee groaned. "It's early, Doc. C'mon."

Horst was standing at the end of their bed and smiling. "We have to prep you, and you're the first on my list this morning. This is the last place I want to be at six a.m. Believe me."

Grigg got up, hurried to get his pants back on as Lee laughed.

"You caught us with our pants off, Doc."

Horst laughed. "I've seen worse."

Grigg blushed. “I was trying to be comfortable.”

Lee smiled. “No one can resist me.”

“I know.”

The nurses came in to put up the edges of Lee’s bed. Grigg took Lee’s hand and squeezed.

“I’ll be back.”

“I know.”

Horst smiled at him. “You can wait here, or downstairs whichever you’d like.”

“I’ll…I have someone coming.”

“Alright.”

Grigg watched them take him out and down the hall as tears filled his eyes and when they were gone he went into the bathroom to scream into his hands. He was shaking, crying, and could barely keep still but he didn’t want anyone to see.

He felt his phone vibrating in his pocket and took it out sniffling. “Duncan?”

“I’m on my way.”

“It’s six fifteen,” Grigg said, sniffling, “You weren’t supposed to come yet.”

“Grigg, I can *feel* you. I’m on my way.”

“What? I…”

The call cut off and Grigg put a hand to his chest.

Duncan could feel him?

How?

He wiped his cheeks, stood, and put water on his face before heading downstairs. All his worries about Lee suddenly were pushed aside by Duncan’s call, and he walked outside ignoring the chill in the morning air to wait for him.

Duncan’s truck pulled up not long after, and he rushed toward him meeting the alpha halfway. He hugged him tight, and Grigg buried his face in Duncan’s neck.

“You felt me?”

“Instantly,” he whispered, “I…I think we’re growing a pre-bond.”

Grigg’s heart skipped a beat as he looked up at him. “Really?”

Duncan kissed him softly. “Is that such a surprise?”

“No, but…I know you’re not ready.”

“I’m not, but that’s not stopping our bodies now, is it?”

Grigg smiled. “I guess not.”

Duncan hugged him again tightly. “I’m sorry I didn’t bring coffee,” he sighed, “I couldn’t wait to see you.”

“I don’t need it, and we can get some inside.”

“Lead the way.”

They walked arm in arm into the hospital, heading for the cafeteria while Grigg texted the group chat.

Grigg: He’s being prepped for surgery now, but I’m here waiting so don’t worry if you can’t come.

Adam: Will’s closing the library today and I want to come. Nigel is coming too, if that’s ok.

Grigg: Duncan is here.

Second Adam: Am I the only one without a date? Fuck. I’ll have to pretend Will is my alpha.

Grigg: lol. Good luck. I’ll see you all soon.

He leaned on Duncan, who kissed his cheek. “Everything ok?”

“Yeah, everything is just fine.”

Chapter 16

Waiting wasn't as hard with Duncan near, and Grigg took the time to look at his friends with the comfort of his alpha so close.

Adam and Nigel seemed better, closer than they'd been the last time, though they weren't yet mated. Will was agitated, barely able to sit for more than a few minutes, and he kept leaving multiple times to go outside only to come back looking less than happy.

Second Adam was checking his phone nonstop, not smiling, and Grigg knew it wasn't his place to butt in but after last night he was worried.

He turned to Duncan and leaned up to whisper in his ear. "I'm gonna go outside for a bit with Adam, ok?"

Duncan frowned. "Alone?"

Grigg smiled. "We'll be fine, Alpha. I promise."

Duncan didn't look convinced, but he nodded as Grigg got up to go over to Second Adam.

"Hey," he said, "Wanna take a walk?"

Second Adam frowned. "I'm fine just where I am, Griggy."

"You don't look it, and I could use the company."

He sighed. "Fine."

The two of them went out through the front doors, heading for a bench nearby, and Adam pulled out his phone again twice even before they sat down.

“Can I ask about the phone?”

He frowned at him. “Ask what?”

“You’ve been looking at it nonstop. Is something…”

He shoved the phone into his pocket and sighed. “It’s nothing, Darling, I’m just checking on someone.”

Grigg smiled. “You? Caring about someone?”

“Is that so hard to believe?”

“No, but—”

Adam sighed, rubbing at his neck. “People change, Grigg, you know? And it’s not like I don’t care about all of you. I’m not a complete monster.”

“I didn’t mean it that way.”

He pulled out his phone again, almost like he couldn’t not, and the smile that lit up his face was unlike any Grigg had seen from him before. He typed fast, chuckling, and looked over at Grigg blushing hard.

“Don’t.”

“Do I know them?”

“It’s *nothing,* alright? Just a good time, and…we’re getting along a bit that’s all.”

Grigg smiled. “Ok.”

“I’m not about to get myself stuck like all of you.”

“I didn’t say you were.”

“You were thinking it, I know.”

Grigg laughed. “Lee is gonna be pleased.”

“Oh god don’t tell him! He’ll want to know who it is, and he’ll figure it out immediately. I can’t lie to him at all.”

“Well now that’s the first thing I’m telling him when he wakes up.”

Adam groaned. “I hate you.”

He wrapped his arm around him. “No, you don’t.”

“No, but I can still say it.”

Grigg kissed him on the cheek. “Yes, you can. Wanna go back inside or do you have a call to make?”

Adam blushed. “Shut it, and…I’ll be there in a minute.”

Grigg got up, still smiling, and headed for the door only to stop short. There was a man standing at the edge of the sidewalk staring his way in a black suit, the noticeable scar under his strange eye making Grigg pause.

He felt his heart beat faster, suddenly worried, and rushed ahead the door only to be stopped halfway by Duncan.

“Grigg?”

“Someone was out there,” he said, his voice shaking, “I…I think he was watching us. I…oh god Adam is still out there!”

Grigg turned to run back out, Duncan at his side, and they saw Second Adam looking scared, staring in the same direction Grigg had seen the stranger. They ran over, Grigg taking Adam’s hand, and he let out a long breath almost like he’d been holding it in.

“Adam?”

“I…I thought I saw a ghost,” he said, “It was the strangest thing.”

“A ghost?”

Second Adam blinked back tears as he laughed. “I really do need to eat more in the mornings, don’t I?”

“Who did you see?”

He shook his head. “No one, Grigg, it was just…”

“Was it the man with the scar and the strange eye?”

Second Adam looked at him sharply. “You…you saw him too?”

“Yeah, I…I thought maybe he was one of Duncan’s…bad people that Duncan’s been worried about.”

Duncan grabbed Grigg’s arm and pulled him close. “Strange eye?”

“Yeah, and a scar.”

Duncan looked at Adam. “Do you know him? The man?”

Second Adam shook his head, looking away. “No, I didn’t know him.”

He glared at him. “He’s lying.”

“Adam?”

Adam got up, shaking his head. “I can’t just…I need to get out of here. This whole thing is driving me mad!”

He moved to leave and Duncan rushed up to him, grabbing Adam's arm hard.

"Unhand me!" he yelled.

"Who was he? WHO?"

A loud yelling made Grigg turn to see Will rushing out toward them.

"Will, no! It's ok! He's…"

He pushed Duncan back hard. "Get your hands off of him! What the fuck are you doing?"

Duncan cursed. "He's hiding something!"

Second Adam laughed. "He's insane! I'm not hiding anything! The old man's gone off his rocker."

Grigg rushed to step between Duncan and Will.

"Will, please."

Will glared at him. "Grigg, you know I care about you, but he can't just go grabbing Adam like that."

"I know, but…if there's danger he's worried, that's all."

"There's no danger," Adam said, "Je…there's no danger."

Grigg turned. “How do you know?”

He sighed. “Grigg, there’s some things I don’t have to tell all of you. I’m allowed a bloody private life.”

“Adam, you don’t ever keep your life private,” Adam said, making them all turn, “You tell everyone everything, it’s very rude.”

Nigel pulled Adam close. “Darling, I think we need to stay out of this.”

Second Adam shook his head. “I think *I* need to go before Grigg’s old man attacks me again. Just…calm down, old man. Everyone is safe.”

“How do you know?”

Second Adam smiled at him. “Because if he’s not a ghost? Then we’re all safer than we’ve ever been.”

Grigg sighed. “What does that mean?”

He ignored them, heading for his car, and part of Grigg wanted to follow but he didn’t.

Duncan put his arm around him. “I’ll figure things out, Grigg, I promise.”

“Maybe he’s right.”

“What?”

“If Adam has some sort of *special* friend that can protect us all then,” he looked up at Duncan, “That’s a good thing, isn’t it?”

Duncan frowned. “How can you just blindly believe that?”

“Because he’s my friend,” Grigg said, “And I believe him.”

A cough made them both turn to see Will looking sheepish. “Sorry about that,” he mumbled, “I…I get a little protective around omegas.”

“Obviously.”

“Duncan—”

Will held out his hand for Duncan to shake, and he did with reluctance.

“Now that we’ve settled all that,” Nigel said, “Can we get back inside? Adam doesn’t need all this noise.”

“I’m fine, Nigel,” Adam frowned.

“I know you think that, Darling, but—”

Adam pulled away from him, saying nothing, and walked back inside alone. He sighed, rubbing his neck.

“Fuck.”

“He’s fine,” Grigg said, “He…”

“I know he’s fine,” Nigel mumbled, “I just hate it when my omega is mad at me.”

Will patted Nigel on the shoulder. “Join the club.”

Grigg frowned.

“What? Will, you don’t have an omega.”

Will blushed. “I…I just mean…I don’t like when omegas are mad at me. That’s all. I…I need to use the bathroom.”

They all headed inside, Grigg looking back at where Adam had left, and sighing deeply.

Everything felt so strange, and yet better than it had been just weeks ago. He sat down with Duncan in the seats they’d left close to everyone, and pulled out his phone.

Second Adam: I’m fine, Grigg. Just let me know when Lee is awake, yes?

Grigg: Ok. You’re sure you’re fine?

Second Adam: Very

Adam: You can tell us secrets, Adam. We’re friends. You don’t have to keep secrets from us.

Grigg looked up to see Adam looking down at his phone and frowning.

Second Adam: Some secrets are a bit harder than others, Addie. I promise everything is fine. Go hug your boyfriend for me.

Adam: Ok.

Grigg sighed, leaning in close to Duncan who pressed his lips to Grigg's ear.

"I know you're worried about Lee, and things are up in the air but…do you want to go somewhere tonight just for a few hours? Just the two of us?"

Grigg smiled. "Please?"

He kissed him softly, fingers brushing his cheek. "I know just the place."

Grigg felt warm all over. "I can't wait."

They sat there for another two hours, Grigg barely able to keep his eyes open, and before he passed out he hard Horst's familiar voice.

"There's the Lee club," he said.

He perked up. "Is he…?"

"He's just fine," Horst said, nodding, "He'll need to be here under observation for another night just in case but he's fine. I'd say you can go up and see him but he'll be out for a few hours yet. If you want to go get some lunch, or come back later…"

"We're fine right here," Adam said, "But thank you."

“I just wanted to let you all know. Lee’s a fighter,” he said, “He’s the most stubborn of them all, don’t worry.”

Grigg laughed. “Yes, he is. Thank you, Doctor.”

Horst nodded, and left them again.

Will sighed.

“Well…I think I’m gonna go, I’ll be back in a few.”

“Can you…?”

He smiled. “I think Adam wants to be alone, but I’ll call him when I get to my car. Anyone want anything brought back?”

“Adam might—”

“I’m fine,” Adam snapped, pulling away from Nigel, “Just fine.”

Nigel sighed. “We’re fine.”

Will took off, leaving the four of them alone, and Grigg had half a mind to go up now but didn’t move. He wasn’t ready, not yet.

He pulled out his phone and typed in ‘criminal with eye scar,’ still a little unsure.

Nothing came up.

Nothing at all.

He frowned.

“Grigg?”

Grigg looked up at Duncan. “Can we just…you have your truck?”

“Yes.”

“I just want to go for a drive, just…I need to…”

Duncan nodded and turned to Adam and Nigel. “We’re gonna go get some air. Call Grigg if there’s any problems?”

Adam nodded at Grigg, who almost ran out of the waiting room with Duncan close at hand. They headed for the parking garage, barely halfway inside before Grigg pulled him close smashing their mouths together. Duncan groaned, pulling him closer, and Grigg whimpered as he pulled back.

“Grigg?”

“I need to just…not think…just for a second. Can we just…?”

“Here? Now?”

“Anywhere,” Grigg sighed, “Alpha, I need you.”

Duncan touched his cheek. “That place I told you about going tonight? It’s private, and no one would bother us.”

Grigg nodded. “Take me there? Please?”

Duncan kissed his hand. “Let’s go.”

They took off toward his car, almost running, and he let all his worries fall away. Second Adam’s secrets, Lee’s illness, and even Adam being upset with Nigel…all of it.

Right now he needed to be away.

Far away.

They headed for the truck, and the minute he got inside Grigg smashed his mouth to Duncan’s again.

“Grigg, I…”

He put a finger to Duncan’s lips. “Let’s go, Duncan. Please?”

He nodded and said nothing as they pulled away. Grigg leaned on him and closed his eyes as heat seemed to fill him.

He was safe.

And with his alpha.

Right now he needed nothing else.

Chapter 17

“This is it.”

They pulled up to a remote area, far past Duncan’s place, and Grigg got out looking down at a cliff overlooking houses down below. He let out a long breath, closing his eyes, and Duncan came up behind hugging him tight.

“Thank you.”

He kissed his cheek. “For?”

“I just,” he sighed, turning in his arms, “Needed this.”

“I’m happy to be of service.”

Grigg opened his eyes and smiled up at him. “You always are, Alpha.”

Duncan smiled. “Am I servicing you now, then?”

He licked his lips. “Not that kind of service, and you know it.”

He kissed him softly. “No?”

“Duncan….”

Duncan lifted him up with ease, making Grigg sigh, and before he could think he was lifted into the back of the truck. He climbed up after him, pressing Grigg down onto a pile of old blankets.

“Isn’t this romantic?” Grigg laughed.

Duncan grinned, kissing him again. “No, but it’s…it feels like us.”

Grigg paused. “Us?”

He brushed some hair off Grigg’s forehead. “You sound surprised to hear that word.”

“No, I just…you’ve been saying for forever that you’re unsure if it’s safe so…”

He kissed him again. “Your friend says it’s safe, so I shouldn’t worry. Right?”

Grigg nodded. “Right.”

“So,” he started, touching Grigg’s cheek, “Us.”

Grigg smiled. “I’ve never been an ‘us’ before, “ he said, “Or atleast not for long.”

“Fools,” Duncan said, frowning, “All of them.”

“Alpha…”

Duncan kissed him again, hard this time, and Grigg shook as he continued down his neck.

“God you taste so damn good.”

“Alpha, please.”

He lifted Grigg’s shirt off, tossing it to the side, and soon they were both losing clothes so fast his head spun. Duncan growled, flipping him onto his belly, and shoved his face against Grigg’s wet willing hole licking like a starving man.

“ALPHA!” Grigg cried out, shaking as he went wild.

Duncan took hold of his cock, stroking as he went, and Grigg was so far gone it felt like a low burn heat. He was close, so close, and yet he never wanted it to stop. Duncan grunted, lifted his head, and said the words he’d been dying to hear.

“If I don’t stop soon, I’m going to fuck you right here and….”

He turned, panting, and stared into Duncan’s eyes. “Who told you to stop?”

Duncan let out a breath. “Grigg…”

He shoved his ass back, and Duncan moaned. “Please?”

“You know what might happen.”

“I do.”

“Grigg…”

Grigg pulled him in for a kiss, and Duncan's shudder in response only spurred him on. He needed this, wanted it so bad he might die without it, and when Duncan shoved him onto the blankets he cried out when he finally got it. Duncan's cock was the largest he'd taken, he knew, but it felt so damn good he'd never take another.

He cried out, pulling him into another kiss, and soon they were both so far gone they couldn't stop.

Every thrust felt like not enough, and every kiss was just shy of what they needed. Grigg didn't know anything other than this, them two, and when he felt Duncan bite into his neck and grabbed hold of his arm biting back.

It wasn't a mating bite, not yet, but soon Duncan's knot filled him up so good he let out a sob, fucking back against it until they both collapsed. He could feel Duncan's bite searing into his neck, branding him, and the frustration at not being able to finish made him whine.

Duncan kissed his bite, licking, and he whimpered. "Alpha…"

"Shhh…"

"I want…"

"I know."

They laid there in the aftermath, the quiet breeze everything as Duncan's knot flooded into him over and over again. This wasn't a heat, which he realized he was thankful for, but it would be soon.

Days even.

Mating bites always made subsequent heats come sooner, to solidify a bond the old fashioned way if the bonded pair was ready. Grigg knew they weren't, and that was ok.

"Mine," Duncan whispered, "Grigg…"

He felt his knot go down, pulling himself off and shoving Duncan down before he bit him back hard. Duncan hissed, holding him close, and their bond closed instantly. Grigg had tears in his eyes as Duncan's fingers came through his hair.

"I'll protect you with my life," Duncan said, "I won't let them take you."

Grigg lifted his head. "So will I."

"Grigg…."

"This isn't how I thought this would happen."

Duncan smiled. "Neither did I, but I'm not upset."

"No?"

"No, I…I'm just sorry your mating bond story is in the back of a dirty pick up truck."

Grigg laughed, laying his head on Duncan's chest. "I'm not."

"No?"

"Nope."

“Why?”

“Because it’s…it fits. Neither of us is fancy, are we?”

“I suppose we’re not.”

“And it’s a better story than moonlight and roses. It’s real.”

Duncan ran fingers through his hair. “Hmm.”

They lay there for what felt like forever until Grigg’s phone rang.

“Yeah?”

Will’s voice was on the other end of the line. “He’s awake.”

“We’ll be there.”

He ended the call and Grigg sighed. “Lee’s awake.”

“Mmm…”

He looked at his phone again and texted Second Adam.

Grigg: Lee is awake.

Second Adam: Thank bloody fuck. Are you there yet?

Grigg: No, Duncan and I needed some time alone.

Second Adam: How alone?

Grigg: As alone as you're thinking.

Second Adam: Oh Grigg you know me so well.

He sat up with a sigh. "I guess we better get back."

Duncan kissed him again softly. "Are you ready?"

"As I'll ever be."

Duncan jumped down, and helped Grigg do the same while they got dressed fast. The scent of their sex was stilll in the air, but there was little they could do, and as they drove Grigg found he didn't care.

The closer they got to the hospital the happier he was, and Duncan's half of their bond was the same.

This was how they were supposed to be, he knew that now, and the weight of that finally being gone was everything. They got to the hospital after a longer drive than last time, traffic worse than before, and when they got out they held hands to the door.

Adam was the first to smell them.

"You mated?" he asked, frowning.

Nigel was right beside him, and when he reached out to touch Adam's arm he was rebuffed.

“Yeah, we…um…” Grigg mumbled, rubbing his mating mark, “We got a little carried away.”

Adam forced a smile. “I’m happy for you, Grigg.”

“Adam…”

He got up, ignoring Nigel. “I need to use the restroom. Excuse me.”

Grigg frowned when he left.

“What’s going on?”

Nigel glared at them. “You couldn’t keep it in your pants for one fucking day?”

Duncan stepped in front of Grigg. “Like that’s any of your damn business.”

“Hey, I know Adam and this…”

“If you know Adam so damn well then why can’t you see this is *your* fault, not ours?” he spat, “The kid obviously is ready to mate, you're too chicken shit to do it!”

Nigel lunged at him, and Duncan hit him in the face just before security pulled them apart.

“Break it up, break it up, come on now fellas!”

Duncan calmed, and Grigg grabbed his shoulder. “Duncan…”

“I’m gonna use the john,” he said, “And get away from this asshole.”

“Oh fuck off,” Nigel said, slumping in the nearest seat.

The two security guards looked at Grigg. “Is everything ok here?”

He nodded.

They both left and he sighed sitting across from Nigel. “I’m sorry.”

“For what?”

“He shouldn’t have said that.”

Nigel frowned. “Why? It’s true.”

“What?”

“Adam’s more than ready, has been since….” he sighed, “It’s me, it’s all me.”

“Nigel….”

“Nigel?”

They both turned and Adam ran over to touch the already darkening bruise on Nigel's cheek.

"What happened?"

"Grigg's old man and I got into it, Star. It's nothing."

Adam glared at Grigg. "What did he do? Why would he hurt Nigel?"

"Adam…"

"Nigel doesn't like fighting in public, because of his…because he doesn't want to get arrested. He wouldn't have started this. Your…" he paused as he saw Duncan coming back, "We're going upstairs. Excuse me."

Nigel smiled as Adam pulled him along, obviously happy at Adam's protectiveness, and Grigg sighed watching them go.

"I'm sorry, mate. He was the one who lunged at me, you know that, yes?"

"After you called him a coward, Alpha."

"He is one," Duncan mumbled.

"Duncan."

He sighed. "I'll apologize when they come back."

Grigg smiled and leaned his head on him. “Thank you.”

They waited for a bit longer and were surprised when Adam and Nigel came back first. Nigel had an ice pack on his eye walking toward them, and Adam still glared.

“You can go up now,” he said, “I’m taking Nigel home.”

“Star, I told you I was fine.”

“No, we’re leaving. Have a good day, Grigg. I am happy for you, even if your alpha is horrible.”

“Adam!”

Nigel snickered. “Star, I told you I was the one who…”

Adam pulled him along, and Duncan sighed. “What does that one like? Stars? I can buy him something.”

Grigg laughed. “He’ll get over this, and honestly Nigel is thrilled.”

“If you say so.”

They went up together, and found Will and Second Adam already there. Second Adam looked like he’d been crying, but no one really said anything, and Lee was the first one to notice their scent.

“Are you serious, Griggy? On my day? You really had to get mated on my day?”

Grigg blushed. “It wasn’t like we planned it!”

Will raised an eyebrow. “Obviously.”

Second Adam looked away, forcing a smile. “I honestly thought Adam would be the first to get the bite,” he sighed, “Now I’m gonna lose the pool.”

“What?”

Lee laughed. “There’s no pool, ignore him.”

Will handed Lee a twenty dollar bill, and so did Second Adam. He set both on the bedside tray, and smiled.

“Are you serious?”

He shrugged. “What else were we supposed to do?”

Grigg laughed.

“Though I didn’t expect Grigg’s new mate to punch Adam’s boyfriend. That was a surprise.”

“It really wasn’t my fault.”

“Uh huh.”

They all stayed there till time was called, and despite Grigg offering to stay Lee said no.

“I need some time, Griggy,” he said, frowning, “Just on my own. Don’t worry, I have Doctor Hot here with me.”

He winked.

“You’re sure?”

“Absolutely.”

They hugged again, leaving one by one, and Duncan and Grigg were the last to head downstairs. He climbed into Duncan’s truck, and they drove back to his place together eager to be alone again.

Though the minute they got inside the sound of a gun cocking made them both freeze.

A woman sat across the room, holding a gun, and Duncan pulled Grigg close to him as she smiled.

“Hello Black Kaiser.”

“Vivian.”

Grigg’s heart beat wildly in his chest.

He’d told Duncan he was ok with anything, but in reality he’d never expected this.

“What do you want?”

“What do I want?” she laughed, “I…”

The sound of glass breaking just before she fell made them both cry out, and they stared at her still body. Someone had shot right through Grigg’s window, like they’d been waiting for this. They rushed out the door together, looking around, but saw no one.

Duncan hugged Grigg to him tight.

“I think,” he said, “Your friend Adam was telling the truth.”

“What, that some random man I never met is protecting us because of him?”

“Grigg, Vivian was a master assassin. Even she would’ve seen someone coming, unless they were better than she is, and….if there’s someone out there better watching for threats? Then we’re safer than ever.”

Grigg leaned back in his arms.

“I don’t know what to think.”

He kissed Grigg’s cheek, made a gesture with his hand, and they walked inside.

“What was that?”

“A thank you.”

“Alpha…”

He turned Grigg around and lifted his chin. “We’re safe, mate,” he said, “At least for tonight.”

“There’s a dead body on the floor.”

“If we go upstairs and go to sleep, it won’t be here in the morning. It’ll be like nothing happened at all.”

“Duncan…”

He kissed him softly. “Do you trust me, Grigg?”

“Yes.”

Duncan held out his hand. “Then let’s go.”

Grigg didn’t look back, not at all, and he leaned against Duncan the whole way up the stairs. He knew it was crazy, and reckless, but if anyone would know it was Duncan.

And he knew through their bond Duncan was telling the truth.

They dressed down, falling into his bed, and Grigg sighed pulling him closer.

“I love you,” he said, “you know that, right?”

“You’re sure?”

“Yes.”

Duncan kissed his forehead. “I love you, Grigg,” he sighed, “I…I honestly can’t remember a time I wasn’t in love with you.”

Grigg smiled.

“Good.”

He fell asleep without care, and in the morning Duncan was proven right.

It was like nothing had happened.

There really was someone looking out for them.

Just who was it that Adam was involved with?

Chapter 18

Duncan was right about the body.

And everything else.

The body was gone the next morning, and the window was fixed. Grigg was terrified that someone had broken into his house but Duncan kept trying to explain that whoever it was had their back.

“It’s not a threat if they’re here to protect us.”

Grigg frowned across the breakfast table at him. “They broke into the house, removed a body, and replaced the window. It might not be a threat but it’s not…normal.”

Duncan put his hand over Grigg’s and entwined their fingers. “It’s not *normal* , Grigg, but it’s safe. That’s all I care about. We don’t have to run, and you can stay with your friends. Aren’t you happy?”

Grigg sighed. “I guess.”

He kissed his hand, and pushed love through their bond making Grigg smile.

“I’ll make you happy, mate, as best I can. I promise.”

Grigg got up from his seat and climbed into Duncan’s lap, wrapping arms around his neck. “You already are, Alpha. I’ve never been this happy in my life, I just…I guess I have to get used to being mated to an ex assassin.”

Duncan smiled, kissing him softly. “I think you’re doing very well already.”

He grinned. “Oh?”

Duncan kissed his mating mark and he shivered. “Yes, you’ve already…gotten one part down perfectly.”

“What’s…that?”

“You’ve made me very, very happy.”

Grigg scented his cheek. “Alpha…”

“And I know that every day we’re together it’s only going to get better. Grigg…”

He whimpered, lifting Duncan’s head, and kissed him desperately. Duncan growled, shoving his hands down the back of Grigg’s pants, and he felt a gush of slick spill down his backside before they’d barely begun.

“Alpha…”

Duncan pulled back and nuzzled his chin as he stuck two fingers inside him. Grigg cried out, rocking back against his hand, and soon the dishes fell as he was lifted onto the table. He sighed, warmth seeming to spread throughout his body, and stared up at Duncan gasping for breath as he undid his jeans.

“Just beautiful.”

“Alpha, alpha, alph—“

He moaned when Duncan thrust inside him, the feel of their bond making it so much more, and as he started to fuck him Grigg cried out feeling suddenly so desperate for more he could hardly breathe.

“Your scent,” Duncan gasped, “Grigg, it’s—“

“Heat,” Grigg groaned, “Oh god I’m going into heat it’s…we have to stop or I’ll..”

Duncan lifted him up, still connected, and stared into his eyes. “Do you want to stop for me or for you?”

“What? I don’t…”

He brushed the sweaty curls from Grigg’s face and whispered in his ear. “Do you want me to breed you, mate?”

“Dun—Alpha, I…”

“We’re safe, Grigg,” he gasped, not moving even though Grigg could feel the heat growing, “And I can’t think of anything I’d love more but if you’re not ready we can stop.”

Grigg lifted his head, tears filling his eyes.

“Duncan, I…I want to, I do, but I don’t want you to have to…”

Duncan pulled back fast only to thrust into him again making Grigg let out a sob of relief. “Mine,” he growled, “Mine to fill, mine to breed…”

Grigg groaned. “Oh fuck you’re…a rut. Duncan…”

He lifted Grigg again, shoving him against the fridge, and things fell all around them as he fucked him again and again. Grigg’s senses were haywire, the world around them a blur, and soon all he needed was Duncan.

They fucked like starving men, over and over until he finally came biting Duncan’s lip as the heat haze waned. Duncan continued, lost in his own rut, and when he came knotting Grigg so good another orgasm was ripped from him when he bit into his neck, they collapsed into the couch.

Grigg knew he had more sense than Duncan did, reading for his phone at the table by the couch as Duncan licked his wound.

“Hello?”

“It’s…me,” he gasped, “I…heat. Alpha…rut.”

“Oh Christ,” Will groaned, “Are you ok?”

“Ama…zing,” he sighed, “I…call…no work…done.”

“Ok, ok, I’ll bring food and water and I’m sure you’ll be pregnant by the end of this so l’ll toss in a test. I’m happy for you, Grigg.”

“Thank…”

Duncan grabbed the phone and threw it across the room kissing him again even as his knot pulsed inside Grigg. He sighed, clutching his neck, and he thrust gently into him making Grigg groan.

“Alpha…”

“Mine,” he growled, “Mine, mine…”

They were lost after that, Grigg coming again just before the knot started to wane and Duncan’s haze didn’t. He carried Grigg to the bedroom and they nested. It was the greatest thing Grigg had ever experienced, and yet it had barely begun.

The heat lasted five days.

Five amazing, fantastic days.

Duncan came out of it first on the fourth day, apologizing profusely even as Grigg begged for his knot. He was amazingly attentive all night long, and when Grigg finally felt like himself again they ate together in his bed gorging themselves on what Will had brung.

Grigg buried his face into Duncan’s neck and sighed.

“Thank you.”

“For?”

“I’ve never….it’s never been like that, not with anyone.”

Duncan kissed his cheek. “Good.”

He lifted his head.

“I might be pregnant.”

“Yes, I know.”

“Do I smell different?”

Duncan smiled. “Right now this room reeks of sex, mate. I wouldn’t smell if the house was on fire.”

Grigg laughed. “I’m being serious!”

“So am I!”

He set his face against Duncan’s bare chest, and sighed as the alpha ran fingers through his hair.

“Duncan…”

“If you are, I’ll be thrilled. If you’re not, I’ll be happy still because we’re mates and there’s plenty of time.”

Grigg lifted his head again, and tears filled his eyes.

“You’re sure?”

“Damn sure.”

He kissed him softly, and pressed their foreheads together.

“I love you.”

“I love you.”

They lay there for a long while, content in the quiet, and soon Grigg fell asleep only to be woken by kisses.

“Grigg, wake up.”

“Mmm?”

“Open your eyes, mate. I need to see.”

He blinked, wincing at the bedside lamp. “What time is it?”

“Just past five,” Duncan said, kissing his cheek, “And you…you smell sweeter.”

Grigg lifted his head up fast. “What?”

Duncan smiled. “I wiped us both off and your scent it’s changed but I’m not sure…I know it’s soon but I brought the test.”

He froze. “I’m not sure. What if we get a false positive or a false negative?”

He brushed the hair from Grigg's cheek.

"The box says best results twenty four hours from heat's end. It's been about seven so we can wait till morning. You can just take Friday off."

"Ok, I'll call Lee and…"

His eyes widened.

Lee.

They'd forgotten about Lee.

Grigg shot up, ready to bolt, when Duncan produced his phone out of nowhere. "I've already checked in. Lee is home, they're all checking in and helping him. Breathe, mate."

He collapsed against Duncan.

"I'm sorry."

"Don't apologize."

He lifted up and Duncan kissed his forehead. "I'm both terrified and excited."

"I feel the same."

Grigg crawled into Duncan's lap. "I'm also hungry."

He kissed his head. “The pizza is on the way.”

“I love you.”

“I love you.”

They ate pizza in bed twenty one minutes later, just as they had everything else, and Duncan checked in on Lee but didn’t tell him Grigg was out of heat.

Though he had his suspicions.

“Oh no, he’s definitely…yes. Yes. Yes I know. Yes, we…talked when it began. Yes we will. Goodnight Lee.”

Grigg smiled. “He knows.”

Duncan rubbed his scarred eye. “Your best friend is very astute.”

He nodded. “Yes, he is.”

Duncan pulled him closer. “He says we still must name the baby after him.”

Grigg laughed. “I know.”

“And he asked if I made sure to ask you if you were ready. I said yes.”

Grigg closed his eyes. “He’s a good friend.”

“I’m happy you have them.”

“So am I.”

They fell asleep not long after, exhausted by the last few days, and Grigg woke first getting up to take a pee only to pause when he saw the test. He grabbed it, running inside, and was shaking when he opened the box.

It didn’t take long at all, and washed his hands before he sat on the toilet counting the minutes in his head.

Then he got up, not looking, and opened the door to see Duncan on the other side. “Grigg?”

“I didn’t look yet.”

He held the test out and knew by the look on Duncan’s face.

“We’re having a baby?” He asked, tears filling his eyes.

Duncan couldn’t hold back his tears as he smiled.

“We’re having a baby.”

Grigg let out a sob, throwing his arms around him and they fell onto the bed as the test dropped to the ground. The sudden need to feel his alpha was overwhelming, and he almost thought the test might be wrong but didn’t care. Duncan groaned as he sunk down onto his

cock, riding him wildly, and they both came so soon he barely had time to breathe. Grigg collapsed onto Duncan's chest, gasping for air.

"We're gonna be daddies."

He kissed his cheek as his knot pulsed.

"Yes, we are."

Grigg hugged him tight.

"I never…I thought I was gonna be alone forever. No one wanted me and I just…"

Duncan lifted his chin and smiled at him.

"I'm sorry I took so long."

Grigg let out a sob, kissing him again.

They may have gone through more than most, and it may have been different but it was how it was supposed to be.

Not every mating was by the book.

And maybe that was just fine.

THE END

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